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# WESTMINSTER WATCHTOWER



# *Westminster Watchtower*

BEVERLEY BAXTER



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*“To Edith Kemsley, in gratitude for many happy hours spent ashore and afloat with her and her distinguished husband.”*

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## FOREWORD

A SPECIAL name will have to be found for the British Parliament which was elected in 1935, and is now entering upon its last months. There was lightning in the sky and strange tremors of the earth when this Parliament was born. I am afraid neither the sky nor the earth will have found peace when it has run its course.

What name will historians bestow? Hollywood would call it "The Front Page Parliament," and with some justification. Almost from the day when we first assembled after the Baldwin triumph at the polls there began a series of sensational episodes which made and broke careers or added rich chapters to the history of the nation.

At its very outset a Foreign Secretary was dismissed. Hardly had the last words of Sir Samuel Hoare's resignation speech ended when the glittering personality of Mr. Anthony Eden swept to the centre of the stage.

While we were acclaiming young Sir Galahad and predicting a new Jerusalem on the shores of Lake Geneva there came the sudden shadows of a nation's grief, and the Lords and Commons gathered in Westminster Hall to receive the body of their beloved Monarch, King George V.

We swore allegiance to a new King, and a few months later sat in grim silence while we listened to the words which announced his abdication. Winter changed to Spring, and the members of both Houses of Parliament took their places in the Abbey for the Coronation, while a young King and Queen, who had never desired nor expected such a fate, received the homage of a grateful nation.

Hitler marched into the Rhine. Eden was facing the first of the hammer blows that were to bring him down. Mussolini was winning his Abyssinian gamble. Spain was in flames. Mr. Lloyd George was achieving a new invective, and Mr. Churchill a new audacity.

Over the scene brooded the spirit of Stanley Baldwin, poet, peasant and premier. Beside him sat two men, one of them weary and ineffective, the other clear-headed and dominating. The first was Ramsay MacDonald, whose political star had set—the other was Neville Chamberlain, who, as Managing Director, served under the Chairmanship of Philosopher Baldwin.

Stanley Baldwin went to say good-bye to his constituents. His work was done and he could no longer carry the load of the Premiership. Ramsay MacDonald followed him. Neville Chamberlain, the Managing Director, became the Chairman as well.

Europe continued to thunder at the gates. The heart-break struggle of democracy against the dictators produced endless humiliations and recriminations. Anthony Eden threw in his hand. The crowds in the cinemas cheered him wildly and booed the Premier.

From China, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Palestine the hammer strokes went on. A new man was at the Foreign Office, Sir Galahad had been replaced by Lord Halifax, the Master of Hounds, who prays for guidance in political matters.

Then there was, of course, "l'affaire Duncan Sandys," when the shades of Pym, Hampden and Charles I. came back for an afternoon. Nothing has been missing from the drama and melodrama of the "Front Page Parliament."

"Westminster Watchtower" is to an extent the story of this Parliament. When I entered the House as a member I agreed to the suggestion of my friend, Napier Moore, the Editor of *Maclean's Magazine* of Canada, to write a fortnightly article of a political nature.

We were not at all certain that the experiment would prove successful, or how sustained would be the interest of the Canadian public in the political events and personalities of the old world. Almost immediately, however, our doubts were dispelled. Nothing in my experience of journalism has been more inspiring than the generous reception given to these articles from one end of Canada to the other.

Admittedly there were many readers, especially in the prairie provinces, who took violent exception to my conclusions, but few of them refused to grant me sincerity even in my errors. An immense correspondence developed, which has given me the most intimate glimpse into the life of my fellow Canadians in every province of the Dominion.

It is no mean thing, and no small responsibility, to be accepted by one's own people as an interpreter of British political life and thought. I do not pretend that my account of Westminster and the European scene is blindly accepted in Canada as unalterable historic writ. But on occasions such as the Abdication and the resignation of Mr. Eden a great number of Canadians have been content to see these events through my eyes, even if at the end, they came to conclusions at variance with my own.

If this book has any merit, it lies in the fact that it tells the story of world events since the assembling of the "Front Page Parliament," and assesses the political personalities of the period at the very moment that they met the impact of events. The ultimate historian will have to give his own verdict on the men who guided destiny during the fateful years of 1935 to 1938. This book must be read as coming from one who stood in the wings and saw the grease paint, the genius and the falterings of the principal actors as they played their parts in the glare of the world's footlights. Perhaps there will be something of value to the future historian in this picture of Parliament as well as the glimpse of

Central Europe as I saw it in the eventful days following the crisis on the Czechoslovakian frontier. I wrote my impressions as things happened. That will comprise such value as this book will possess.

I desire to acknowledge the courtesy of the proprietors of *MacLean's Magazine* for permission to reprint many of the London Letters, and also the proprietors of the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Graphic*, the *Daily Sketch* and the *Strand Magazine* for their permission to reprint certain articles of mine published in their pages, and which I have added to the *MacLean's* London Letters in order to fill in the contours of the story.

*A. Beverley Baxter*

House of Commons,  
Westminster.

# *A Foreign Secretary Resigns*

MR. BALDWIN is still Prime Minister of Great Britain. Monsieur Laval is still Premier of France.

Anthony Eden, at thirty-eight years of age, is now Foreign Secretary.

Mussolini is still breathing fire, our Fleet remains in the Mediterranean, and the Abyssinians, with sharpened spears, have just captured seven Italian tanks.

And all the newspapers, as per custom, are printing the usual Christmas wishes of good will to men.

Nothing that I have ever seen has been as dramatic as the Baldwin-Hoare explanation to Parliament of the Laval-Hoare peace plan. Come with me to Westminster and live again the most intense day that the Mother of Parliaments has known since the declaration of war in 1914.

The scene was one of perfect drama. Early in the morning Honorable Members had hurried from their breakfast tables to drop their cards upon the leather seats of the Chamber, which is equivalent to booking seats in advance. Thus, at noon, the famous room was vibrant though empty, as though a crowd of people had called upon a ghost and found him out.

At "Prayers" and question time there was barely standing room left, and beneath the humdrum queries of the insatiable questionnaire-minded enthusiasts there was an underlying tension that was apparent to every one. Voices were pitched higher, words came faster, laughter was easy to rouse, resentment quick to appear. Cheers from the opposition side announced the arrival of their champion, Mr. Atlee, who modestly snuggled into the overcrowded Labour front bench until he was almost gone from sight.

Deep-throated cheers announced the appearance of Mr. Baldwin, who came to his seat with the sturdy walk of one who has covered many miles of open country and whose soul is more than a little weary of the machinations of men. But all this was nothing to the roar that greeted Sir Samuel Hoare, who moved swiftly and gracefully to a place on the Third Bench and, as a private Member, began his speech almost at once.

Here was a scene to remember as long as memory functions. Here was a drama that will be described around the firesides to children in the distance of time. Here was a moment when politics, so often tawdry and insincere, became the most dramatic setting in the world. Like a play of Euripides, this was great tragedy, a tragedy ennobling in its pregnancy and moving in its pathos.

With an exact precision of voice and phrase, as though he distrusted both more than a little, the fallen Secretary began the story of his negotiations with M. Laval. How he had been forced to conform to the new foreign affairs technique which so constantly sends our Foreign Minister abroad ; how his illness had added to his weariness, of his conviction that immediate peace was necessary in Abyssinia to prevent the ills we know not of ; how his doubts of French support and collective League action had grown to suspicions ; how he did not fear single combat with Italy since it could only end one way, but how he dreaded the conflagration that might so easily arise from a Mediterranean eruption . . .

A silent and tense house listened to the measured words uttered in such meticulous style but with a curious musical lilt on certain words. It was a supreme performance by a man whose star had seemed fixed and unchangeable. Across the bridge of his nose was the surgeon's plaster, following his accident in Switzerland. Such a decoration would have made many men look absurd ; with Sir Samuel it but added to his dignity, like the scar on a German student's cheek.

Still in command of his voice and his words, he brought his speech to an end. Then, and only then, the pent-up emotions could be restrained no longer. He began a few words about the difficult task of his successor. As if he could no longer bear the strain he said brokenly: "And I hope that he will have better luck than I had."

He sat down, moved by an emotion that swept the entire assembly. Shakespeare, searching for the last words of Hamlet, wrote, "The rest is Silence." The fallen Secretary had stumbled on a sentence no less pregnant, since it echoed the very spirit of a race that loves a man who plays the game to a finish and takes defeat without a whine.

Right or wrong did not matter then. Every Tory sword was ready to leap from its scabbard in defence of the man who spoke of Europe as Palmerston did, and who had expressed the doubts of the League which election considerations had ruled out. So, with hands partially covering his face, the Right Honourable Member for Chelsea moved swiftly from the House, while angry cheers swept from the Government pack, and embraced alike the front bench of the Government and the benches of the Opposition.

No speech could have followed Sir Samuel's successfully. Few experienced politicians could have done it so unsuccessfully as Mr. Attlee, the Labour leader. In five sentences he had reduced Euripides to a discussion over the teacups. Mr. Attlee is a man of character and education who looks somewhat like Groucho Marx but lacks that gentleman's emotional abandon. He scores with his left, but never employs his right. He is utterly incapable of a knock-out. He did succeed, however, in striking quite a powerful solar plexus blow against his own party. He attacked Mr. Baldwin's personal honour, and from that moment the Government whips relaxed in their seats. Their task was simple.

And so to Mr. Baldwin.

Did ever a Prime Minister rise in circumstances less enviable or more trying? Oscar Wilde in one of his poorer flippancies said that to lose one parent was a tragedy, to lose two looked like carelessness. Mr. Baldwin had lost two Foreign Secretaries in a few months. There was nothing personal in his relations with Sir John Simon, but Sir Samuel Hoare was more than his Right Honourable Friend. He was his *friend*. For twenty years the younger man had yielded to him a devotion and loyalty that had never faltered, and Mr. Baldwin values those qualities above price.

Further than that, the Prime Minister had to say that he had taken a decision and had changed it in the face of a popular clamour. What could he hope from such a situation except the contempt of his opponents and the sullen support of his followers

Three weeks ago Mr. Baldwin was the most powerful dictator in the world. He held a sway over the last Parliament that was unchallengeable. Single-handed, he fought the election, and the triumph of the Government at the polls was a personal triumph for him. And now to stand before the House and make a case in which triumph was impossible and censure certain.

His statement has been received with exuberant satisfaction by his enemies, and once more the cry of "Baldwin must go!" is heard in the country. But, what did he say? Here, in essence, was his case:

"The play of personalities and the leakage in the Press of the Paris terms created a situation in which, although disliking the agreement, I would have had to repudiate the Foreign Secretary. Following the tradition of trusting the man on the spot, we reluctantly agreed. At once a clamour broke out here. I do not hear any normal clamour, but this one showed that the conscience of the British people was outraged. I do not put my judgment before the conscience of our people. That conscience



cannot be wrong, whereas my judgment is frequently in error. I am here to govern the people in the name of the people, and when I am satisfied that what I have heard is the true voice of the people I am not ashamed to accept the guidance of that voice."

No heroics, no play for sympathy. Nothing to cheer his troops. A lesser man or a mere careerist would have stuck to his Paris decision and rallied the swords of the loyalists and the League-baiters to his aid. Instead, he drank deep of the cup of humiliation and merely said: "I conceive that what I have done was my duty."

The verdict of the smoke-rooms was against him. An Honourable Member for an agricultural constituency scored heavily by remarking: "Hoare says, 'I was right, therefore I must resign.' Baldwin says, 'I was wrong, and therefore I must remain Prime Minister.' Isn't it marvellous?"

The rest of the debate did not matter. The humiliations from Sir Archibald Sinclair, Sir Stafford Cripps and Dr. Dalton could not add to the bitterness of Stanley Baldwin's cup. The robust comedy of Lord Winterton's intervention with his, "And now, ladies and gentlemen," could not ease the pain in the Premier's heart. The drama had been played in the earlier hours, and it only remained for Neville Chamberlain to bring reality and discipline to a House that had been soaked with turbulent and conflicting emotions.

Sir Samuel Hoare has gone, but the League remains. M. Laval will probably go next, but Mr. Baldwin lives on. Already the Beaverbrook Press, which had so unexpectedly and embarrassingly supported Mr. Baldwin during the crisis, has resumed its normal rôle of calling for his head on a charger.

As for the rest of us we are preparing, although in no holiday mood, for the Christmas vacation. Usually when the British Parliament rises for Christmas the spirit of

good will and the prospect of good feeding dominate the scene. There is much fraternising among all ranks on both sides, and the wounds of debate are forgotten.

It was not so when we broke up on the day following the famous Foreign Affairs debate. An angry Parliament walked out without a smile or a benediction. An angry Parliament will soon reassemble in February. This year of 1936 is going to see the old Mother of Parliaments in one of her most tempestuous moods. Reputations are going to be blasted, political dynasties will rock and heads will roll in the sawdust.

And as usual the centre of the storm is that simple-hearted yeoman, Stanley Baldwin, who has ridden more hurricanes than any living statesman except Lloyd George. Look back with me for a moment on this strange man of destiny.

In 1922, when the Conservative Party met at the Carlton Club to consider whether it would continue to support Lloyd George's Coalition Government, his was one of the few voices that supported Bonar Law's rebellion. Bonar Law became Premier and made the comparatively unknown Baldwin his Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Almost his first assignment was to go to Washington and "discuss the settlement of the American Debt." Instead Baldwin settled it. He settled it by calmly announcing to a journalist at Southampton that the terms were more generous than Britain had hoped for. Bonar Law's fury knew no bounds. He thought seriously of resigning. In the end he signed but predicted that the foundation of the world economic crash had been laid by this action.

Mr. Baldwin rode the storm. It was then that Lord Beaverbrook conceived the idea of destroying him. At the death of Bonar Law, Mr. Baldwin became Prime Minister, the most inexperienced occupant that Downing Street had known for decades. He went to Newcastle

and made a speech. He said that he was thinking of trying out tariffs.

Once more the storm broke. Bonar Law had gone to the country on the pledge that he would not introduce tariffs without consulting the electorate. Mr. Baldwin had inherited his predecessor's majority and was therefore bound by his pledges. Obviously there must be an election.

Mr. Baldwin led his party to the polls on the policy of industrial tariffs but no protection for agriculture, thus ruling out Joe Chamberlain's policy of Imperial Preference. At this, Beaverbrook's guns—and I was a battery commander—raked the Tories fore and aft. The Government campaign was spasmodic, ill-prepared, and when the smoke cleared away Baldwin had destroyed his inherited majority and the first Socialist Government was born.

For less than one year the Socialists ruled. Then the Zinovieff letter was discovered, and MacDonald was forced to resign and go to the country. Thus the third election in three years took place—and the average cost per election for a Tory candidate is £1,000! The wind blew so hard against the Socialists that it blew Mr. Baldwin back into power with a gigantic majority and he settled down to five years of stable government.

It looked like a period of calm. Tariffs were ruled out, the Socialists were annihilated, the Liberals were dwindling pathetically and the Tories were reunited with the rebellious Winston Churchill at the Treasury. It is true that Beaverbrook was keeping up an intermittent barrage, but on the whole it looked like "Peace in our Time."

But, alas! there was a coal wages dispute which dragged on through weary months. At last the owners and miners agreed to meet on a certain Thursday to discuss terms that would prevent a strike. Mr. Baldwin announced the good news in the House and then added

the unfortunate remark that even if the two sides did not come to terms, the Government was ready to consider a subsidy that would tide the industry over the difficulties.

With such an inducement the owners and miners speedily failed to come to terms, and a Government subsidy began that eventually reached the sum of £30,000,000. When it expired the coal strike began, and after a lengthy existence culminated in the general strike.

So far this is the story of a bungler, a man of gross lack of judgment, a man inept in public affairs. Yet at this point we begin to see the constructive influence of Stanley Baldwin on British public life.

The general strike had to come. The post-war temper of the Trades Unions demanded a show-down. Nor was it a mere desire to dictate. There was a real and sincere resentment against the conditions under which human beings worked and were paid in the mines.

Therefore the strike began and the leaders raised the cry of "Down with Baldwin, the capitalist bully!"

At this the incorrigible British working man shook his head. He was willing to strike to help his pals, but you couldn't tell him Baldwin was a bully. No chance! Didn't he pay the miners £30,000,000 to prevent the strike? And didn't he give up half his fortune to the nation in the war and never say a word about it? "'Im a bully! Not likely!"

It wasn't the tanks and the troops that broke the strike. It was the paralyzing effect of Baldwin's humanity plus the spontaneous rise of the middle classes who decided that England was in danger, and had to be saved.

So the general strike was broken and Baldwin's government passed the Trades Disputes Bill, which made it impossible for the Unions ever to be in a position to attempt a general strike again. And he convinced the shattered ranks of Labour that it was for their good that he was doing it.

Therefore, let us take stock of the man. The bungler of the American debt, the Tariff election and the wasted coal subsidy had broken the revolution in Britain. Almost alone among European nations Great Britain was to be spared the cruelties of internal strife and overthrow.

Previous to this Mr. Baldwin's government, undoubtedly under the influence of the Bank of England, restored the gold standard. All Beaverbrook's previous bombardments were mere experiments in silence compared to the barrage that now fell upon Baldwin's entrenchments. "This," thundered the Canadian Peer—and I assisted in the sound effects—"would rob Britain of her markets, create unemployment, and bring about a domestic crash that would be the beginning of a world crash."

Every one laughed at Beaverbrook. But he was right. At least he was as right as a man can be who trusts his brain more than his soul. In the study of the complete triumph of Baldwin over Beaverbrook, these factors must always be considered.

Here is Beaverbrook's case at all times:

"If you commit yourself to action A, it will inevitably lead to action B. From that point it is only one step to action C, which means final and irrevocable disaster. You, Baldwin, have committed us to action A. You are a national menace. All men who love Britain should rise up and hurl this fellow from office never to return."

And Baldwin says:

"I don't believe much in final and irrevocable disaster. It is so often predicted and so seldom happens. Nor do I assume the mantle of the Almighty and foretell the winds ten years ahead. I must do what seems right and honourable and in keeping with the decency of this people. What I do may be wrong. It often is. But if the spirit of the action strengthens or expresses the character of the British people, then I do not think the harm done

will matter much, whereas the spiritual gain will be considerable."

How would you like to fight a man like that? Beaverbrook has never missed the target once. Every shot is a bull's eye. And when he goes forward to claim the prize there isn't a mark on the target! The bullet has made a hole in the fog; that is all.

So in tranquillity and uninspired legislation, Mr. Baldwin's government lived out its full course, and in 1929 went to the country again under the soporific slogan of "Safety First," accompanied by a huge picture of honest Squire Baldwin smoking his pipe.

At this the British people rebelled. They did not mind discovering Mr. Baldwin's homely virtues themselves, but they weren't going to accept those virtues in place of a policy. Beaverbrook felt that the time for tariffs had arrived—and he was right—but once more Baldwin, remembering his defeat in 1923, had eschewed that platform. As Beaverbrook could not support the Socialists he attacked them and Mr. Baldwin with equal heartiness—and I was in charge of the gas cylinders—and with a superb irrelevancy urged the electorate to vote for larger railway trucks.

Once more Mr. Baldwin was hurled into oblivion. Twice he had led his party to disaster. Twice he had put the Socialists into office. The cry of "Baldwin must go" began to permeate even the Tory ranks, and Beaverbrook, sizing up the situation with complete accuracy, sprang the Empire Party on the country with the threat to swallow the Conservative Party and, once and for all, rid the nation of mumbling, bungling Mr. Baldwin. By-elections were fought, Baldwin candidates were defeated. Finally, at St. George's, the most aristocratic constituency in London, a by-election was fought on the issue of "For or against Baldwin?" and Mr. Baldwin agreed to abide by the result. But his candidate, Duff Cooper, husband of the lovely Lady Diana Manners, did a crafty

thing. He altered the fight to "Are you in favour of newspaper dictatorship?"

The electorate sensed the new menace as it did in the general strike. It went to the polls and voted—not for Baldwin, but against newspaper dictatorship.

And once more Mr. Baldwin, the man of destiny, ruminated: "I have made many mistakes, but those very mistakes have exposed the threat of government by newspapers. We are finished with that, as we are with general strikes.

"Thus with faltering steps do I somehow serve the nation I love so much. No doubt the American debt settlement was bad, but wasn't it time for some nation to show that it intended to honour its bond? And I suppose the gold standard was wrong, but wasn't it our place to try to end the juggling of currencies that was killing international trade? And with all the storms sweeping the world, was it so mad to advise a policy of 'Safety First' so that we would not be drawn into the storm areas?"

At any rate, press dictatorship was dead. Beaverbrook had won every battle but the last one. Still, he might argue that his press had no mean power. Without Beaverbrook's attacks to sustain him, Stanley Baldwin would never have retained the leadership of the Tory party.

So came 1931.

The Socialist government crashed. The Tories could have swept the country, but a National Government was proposed instead.

"That is a grand idea," ruminated Squire Baldwin. "Since we must have unity to meet this crisis, where should we set the example if not in politics? I will gladly serve under my former opponent, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald."

And, because Mr. Baldwin had not committed himself to tariffs or agricultural protection or Imperial prefer-

ence, the Simonite Liberals and the MacDonald Labourites were able to form a common front with him. Whereupon tariffs, agricultural protection and Imperial preference were at once brought in.

"Now if I had fought on Tariffs in 1929," ruminated Mr. Baldwin, "I might have been returned with a small majority, but with nearly half the House committed irrevocably to Free Trade. A National Government would have been difficult and Protection impossible if the Government could ever have been formed. Somehow I seem to have brought this about almost as swiftly as my old friend Beaverbrook could have done and with much less fuss."

His loyalty to Ramsay MacDonald brought a new dignity to British public life.

Time moves on! Another general election came due in November, 1935. Mr. Baldwin was head of the National Government. He declares solidly for the League of Nations, and this, added to the great achievements of his government, sends the British public clamouring to the polls to pay tribute to its great and beloved premier. The bungler has become a giant. His power is supreme.

This time he is swept back on a tide of enthusiasm, and among the floating timber that comes ashore is the writer of this article.

Hardly has Parliament opened when Sir Samuel Hoare leaves for Paris and does the Abyssinian deal with M. Laval. Mr. Baldwin approves.

Once more the storm breaks. This time Beaverbrook does not attack Baldwin, but supports both him and Hoare while attacking Anthony Eden. The storm rises in its fury.

"Stand firm, Baldwin!" shouts Beaverbrook. "I am behind you. Stand easy, Hoare. I will sustain you. Make your peace with God, Eden, for I am after you!"

Beaverbrook is thinking with that superbly logical brain that can always see clear to the horizon but never



beyond: "Any peace in Abyssinia would be worth while to avoid a European conflagration."

But he has not counted on his man of destiny.

"I believe that I have done right," says Sir Samuel Hoare. "But since public opinion does not support me I resign."

"I know that I did wrong," says Mr. Baldwin, "because public opinion and public conscience have taught me so. I am often mistaken, but never shall I stand in the way of the conscience of this people which is always right. The Paris proposals are dead and I part with my greatest friend."

All day long he sat in the House and listened to insult upon insult from the Socialists and anti-Government Liberals, while the growls from his own supporters sounded like feeding-time at the Zoo.

They say that he will never recover from this blow, that he will never regain his mastery over the House or his prestige in the country. But he is probably ruminating at this hour:

"Through my mistake we were able to demonstrate to the world the power of democracy, the ability of public opinion to overthrow a government's decision. Perhaps, somehow, we have struck a mighty blow for the freedom of the people to govern their own destinies. I am tired of office but I must go on."

Do you wonder that we wait with bated breath for the reopening of Parliament, and can you not sympathise with Beaverbrook who is always right, who loves his country just as much as Mr. Baldwin, but whose life has been devoted to the destruction of the indestructible?

# *It Happened in the Desert*

DO YOU KNOW Captain Cimmaruta? Have you ever heard of him:

Let me tell you something about the captain, because his story is important. It is a strange story, and the curious thing is that it concerns both you and me, and perhaps our children.

On November 22, in the year 1934, the captain was in charge of a force of 160 Dubats (native soldiers) at the fortified post of Walwal, which is in the desert that adjoins the boundary between British and Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia. We know nothing more of the captain than that he was an Italian, probably good-looking, fond of a glass of Chianti, and no doubt hummed airs from Verdi's opera when the dusk descended on the desert.

The importance of Walwal lies in the existence there of some 300 wells, water in a desert being more precious than gold. The thirst of the Americans during prohibition was as nothing compared to the thirst of the nomad tribes that make their wandering way about the endless sands that begin and end with the horizon.

The district of Walwal belonged to the Ethiopian Government, but since 1928 the Italians had administered the wells and the Abyssinians made no protest of any kind. It was an administration of mercy, and many races came and drank of the water. Thus did custom and the process of time convince the Italians that the territory belonged to them.

At this stage of the story I must introduce to you Lieut.-Colonel Clifford, an English officer. How it would be easy for me to find out something about the colonel, the names of his clubs, where he was educated

and why, but I prefer the same dim outline for him as for Captain Cimmaruta. The charm of both these gentlemen is that we know so little about them.

The gallant colonel was at the head of an Anglo-Ethiopian Commission for effecting the demarcation of the frontier between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. Having finished this arduous task, he then proceeded, under instructions, to take a grazing survey of the district, and sent word to Walwal that he would turn up there with the rest of the Commission on November 23rd. The delivering of this information was undertaken by no less than 600 messengers, on the principle no doubt that in the desert one might get lost or mislaid.

With well-known Italian hospitality, a small body of Dubats under an Italian N.C.O. advanced some distance to meet the messengers and to inquire who and what they were. The reply was that they were an Abyssinian armed force consisting of regulars and irregulars which had been sent as an extra escort to the Commission. They were commanded by Fitaurari Shiferra, the Governor of Ogaden; Fitaurari Alemayehu; and Omar Samantar, an Italian deserter with a price on his head for the murder of an Italian officer. Just to add to the general good feeling, the three commanders reminded the Italian N.C.O. that Walwal was in Abyssinian territory.

The Italian N.C.O. intimated that he could not agree to their claim over the territory and suggested that they should turn round and go back. Instead of this the Abyssinians proceeded toward the wells, and the Italian force fell back, leaving the Abyssinians in control of some fifteen or twenty wells. Nothing particularly unpleasant happened except that the Dubats, who are fond of collecting souvenirs, took with them one of the Abyssinian N.C.O.'s together with his rifle.

The next day the Commission arrived. Lieut.-Colonel Clifford at once sent a protest to Captain Cimmaruta protesting against the abduction of the Abys-

sinian N.C.O. Captain Cimmaruta waited upon the Commission and explained that they had completely misunderstood the incident. The abducted N.C.O. was an Italian deserter who had voluntarily given himself up together with his rifle, only too happy to be among old friends again. The captain promised, however, that he would hold an inquiry into the matter, and offered, in order to avoid any further unpleasant incidents, to establish a provisional line of separation between the Italian and Ethiopian forces. When the colonel asked how this could be carried out, the captain suggested that the position of the two opposing lines could be indicated by marks and signatures on tree trunks.

After deep thought the colonel turned the suggestion down, lest its acceptance might create a precedent favourable to the Italian view. This left the colonel one up on strategy, and encouraged by this he made a counter-suggestion. In order to give the Ethiopians access to other wells not in their possession, he proposed that the Italian forces should withdraw a short distance, say half a mile. Captain Cimmaruta refused, but offered to allow the Ethiopians to draw water behind the Italian lines under his supervision. The Colonel said, No.

At this point the discussion was adjourned for lunch, where presumably the supply of water was not greatly diminished.

Unfortunately an incident had occurred during the amicable discussion between the captain and the colonel which greatly annoyed the Commission. Two Italian aeroplanes, no doubt actuated only by pardonable curiosity, had flown low over the Anglo-Ethiopian Commission where the British and Ethiopian flags were flying side by side. One of the pilots was Major Porru Locci, and, according to the members of the Commission, the major had trained his machine gun directly upon them, a gesture they regarded as discourteous and bordering upon the unfriendly.

In fact the more the Commission thought about it, the more indignant they became. A Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was at once set up—things happen quickly in the desert—and the offending major gave evidence. He said it was not his machine gun that was trained on them but his camera. He went on to say further that the misapprehension of the Commission was due no doubt to the fact that the machine gun was mounted transversely on the fuselage, and consequently when the aeroplane banked, the machine gun would appear to be trained on the ground. The Commission said that was certainly how it appeared to them. The major added that his flight over the Commission was in no sense a hostile demonstration. Under orders from his superior officer, he was merely carrying out a reconnaissance in search of Captain Cimmaruta.

All this made Colonel Clifford very angry indeed and he decided to withdraw the British Mission to Ado (not to be confused with Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*), some forty miles from Walwal. He explained that he did not want to complicate the situation for the Ethiopian authorities and wished to guard against any regrettable international incident. Thus the British and Ethiopian Commissions left Walwal on November 25, taking with them their respective special escorts of thirty and fifty men.

Unfortunately the gallant 600, now of course reduced to 599 through the capture of their N.C.O., remained behind. These Ethiopians appear to have been a somewhat temperamental force capable of attaching and detaching themselves from the Commission with the greatest of ease. Perhaps they were thirsty. The news spread that there were free drinks going at the wells, and in another three or four days the force of Ethiopians was increased to something between 1,400 and 1,600 men. The Dubats became understandingly dubious. They began to realise that there was more in the desert than just sand.

Before Lieut.-Colonel Clifford withdrew, Captain Cimmaruta asked him if the 600 Abyssinians were really part of his escort since their association with the Commission seemed on a highly detachable basis. The colonel did not reply. Perhaps he did not know the answer.

In these circumstances the captain decided that the Ethiopian force now facing him meant trouble, although the Commission later gave it as their opinion that the force stayed at the wells so as not to give the appearance of a retreat which might cause an uprising.

In the desert every one likes to be on the winning side and it is unhealthy to be a loser. And even if the Abyssinians had retreated successfully through the desert they might have been punished at home in the quaint fashion, so popular in Ethiopia, for letting down the national prestige.

"Better the devil you know . . ." so the intruders stayed at the wells. For ten days the two sides stood facing each other at a distance in some cases of less than five yards. This led to personal remarks on such subjects as physiognomy, ancestry, morals, bodily cleanliness and general defects of personality. Occasionally shots were heard, but no one was certain whether the guns had been fired at human beings or at game. At any rate no casualties were reported. On the night of December 4, the Ethiopians grew impatient and removed some of the brushwood that marked the Italian line. At this, Captain Cimmaruta sent word that any act of violence would be met with force. As a precaution he increased his Dubats to 500.

The next day it happened.

Some say the shot was fired by a Dubat. Other witnesses declared that they heard the commands "*a terra*" and then "*fuoco*." The latter word at any rate needs no explanation. The Italians said on oath that it was an Abyssinian soldier who saw a Dubat sentinel in a tree and

brought him down with his rifle. The truth will probably remain buried in the sands, but at any rate the tension broke and both sides went for each other.

Captain Cimmaruta, who was at his base in Warder, ordered two tanks and three aeroplanes to leave for Walwal immediately and, leaping on a light lorry, he disappeared in a cloud of dust and arrived at Walwal to find that his Dubats, commanded only by non-commissioned officers, had been thrust back and had exhausted practically all their ammunition. No doubt the captain had feared that giving his men enough ammunition might have looked like a provocative act, or perhaps it was just that genial, sunny military organisation which made the Italians so loved by the Austrians in the Great War.

However, more ammunition arrived from Warder and so did the tanks and the aeroplanes. Next day at dawn the battle broke out again and the Ethiopians at last fled toward Ado, leaving 130 dead and a large number wounded, while 30 Dubats lay stiff and motionless in the blood-drenched sand and a hundred more writhed, wounded and dying, while their moans mingled with the cry of the buzzards in the air.

An arbitral commission was set up by the League to inquire into the rights and wrongs. Both sides gave evidence. The conclusion was superb.

The Italians were not to blame since they did not provoke the situation or the incident.

The Ethiopians, by hanging round the wells may have given the impression that they intended trouble, but the evidence failed to show that they were responsible for the incidents of December 5.

Hail, Solomon! It was nobody's fault. The guns went off by themselves.

But Baron Aloisi, the Italian Foreign Minister, declared that the dispute between Italy and Abyssinia was caused by this unprovoked attack and that the

Italian Government must henceforth take measures to defend the Italian colonies threatened by the Abyssinian military preparations.

"Prepare for war!" cried Mussolini.

Mr. Eden went to Rome and had words with the Fascist dictator.

"Down with Eden!" shouted the obedient Italian press. "He is the enemy of Italy."

"Italy is our only friend," moaned M. Laval, "and the League is our only hope."

"As a member of the League," said the Abyssinian Emperor, "I submit the whole question to it and will loyally abide by its decision."

"Too late!" roared Mussolini. "*Anno Cruciale!*" By which he inferred that the year 1935 would show the world something.

So the Italians marched and the British Fleet gathered silently in the Mediterranean, and the skies were filled with death, and Civilisation thrust its tanks and gas cylinders into the rain-soaked breast of Ethiopia.

I have no idea where Captain Cimmaruta is now. I just thought you might be interested to know about him.



## *Mr. Eden Takes Over*

ANTHONY EDEN, just back from Paris, was being asked a question in the House of Commons concerning the future of Europe. The young Foreign Secretary passes his hand across his brow somewhat wearily.

But there is no Eden smile.

Already his face is older and more serious.

As he stood there that day, on the one hand was Germany blackmailing the Allies with troops in the Rhineland; France wondering whether to strike at once; Japan waiting until Russia became embroiled in Europe; Britain arming feverishly yet trying to placate others; Abyssinia crumpling up and calling "Help!"; Belgium asking the British to guarantee her security; Austria wanting the same; Egyptian students in revolt; Italy about to dictate victorious peace terms to the League of Nations; Danzig waiting for the zero hour; Poland threatening war, and Memel boiling over.

The Socialists were urging Eden to trust the League; the Conservatives were declaring the League guilty. Churchill was cursing the Government for armament delay; Lansbury urging complete disarmament in the name of Christianity.

Baldwin, calm and imperturbable, watches young Eden carrying the heaviest load of any statesman living. Sir Samuel Hoare sits back looking ten years younger. Sir John Simon the same.

Anthony Eden, heir to all the mistakes of the past, is trying bravely to reconcile the irreconcilable. He knows that the majority of Tories believe him too young and inexperienced. His friends are anxious. His League adherents no longer praise but warn.

And Eden? He is credited with this remark to a close

friend, "I used to think the front line in France was dangerous!"

What is going to happen to this debonair young Foreign Secretary of Great Britain?

If you can answer that question you will go a long way toward solving the future of Europe. That may seem an overemphasised statement, but I do not think so. Mr. Eden represents a state of mind, a point of view. He is committed to a League of Nations policy, and his triumph or his failure will centre in Geneva.

A few months ago he was the dashing Prince Rupert of politics. While, first Sir John Simon and then Sir Samuel Hoare carried on the grim task of safeguarding Britain's endless foreign interests, this perfectly-tailored young man with his wit and charm and photographability, flashed from London to Geneva, to Paris, to Moscow. He was Minister for League of Nations Affairs, a portfolio that was as big or as little as the holder chose to make it. Eden made it bigger than it was ever intended to be.

Next to Mr. Baldwin, he was the most important human element in the general election. To explain the point: My Liberal opponent in Wood Green actually offered himself as a better supporter of Mr. Eden than the Tory candidate (myself). In other words, candidates who opposed the Government supported its League of Nations Minister.

Thus British foreign policy for the first time in history was virtually in the hands of two men at the same time, the Foreign Secretary and Mr. Eden. It is true that Eden was tactful, but his star was rising at a giddy pace, and his deference to Sir Samuel Hoare was that of a younger man who knows that destiny is calling him.

The break came when the Hoare-Laval proposals were accepted by Mr. Baldwin. Prince Rupert's hour had come. He drew his sword and led a rebellion of the younger Ministers in the Cabinet. Assailed from within and with-

out, Mr. Baldwin gave way and threw Sir Samuel Hoare to the wolves. Sir Austen Chamberlain was offered the Foreign Office, but he in turn suggested Eden. With Chamberlain's all-powerful detachment, his suggestion is almost a command, and thirty-eight-year-old Anthony Eden took over the most anxious job in European politics. The Minister for League of Nations was no more. It had only been created as a frame for the dazzling young cavalier, and when he was gone the frame was destroyed. There will be no second Minister for the League.

Let us gossip about Mr. Eden for a minute while we leave him at the Foreign Office trying to reconcile the policy of Internationalism with an Imperialism that is a form of English-speaking Internationalism in itself.

Anthony Eden's father, Sir William Eden, was a seventh baronet of his line, with the gifts of an artist and an uncontrollable temper, a country squire with an intellectual contempt for his neighbours, a devoted father who terrified and delighted his five children, an aristocrat who was happiest in the company of his peasants, a man who detested the age in which he had been born and went to his death cursing it.

He had four sons. Two of them were killed in the war, the youngest a midshipman. Anthony was at Eton, and when he reached the age of seventeen went with his regiment to France, where he had three years of active service. He won the M.C., ending up as a brigade major, and, the war being over, he went to Oxford.

His father had told him, "Walk as if you had bought the earth." I wonder how far his self-confidence was ripened by the fact that he was a man of twenty-two when he joined the youthful undergraduates at Oxford, a war veteran, a man who had looked death in the face and seen his generation mown down like wheat caught in a hurricane.

Oddly enough, he disdained the Oxford Union, that debating incubator for politicians. He hunted occasion-

ally, and his costume was a thing of quiet elegance. When the craze for baggy trousers struck the university he wore suits of brown and blue so perfectly tailored that the baggiest youths were constrained to humble admiration. Like his father he painted pictures, but not so well, and his friends, who respected his clothes, had no hesitation in ridiculing his pictures. He won first-class honours in Arabic and Persian (the character begins to take form) but scored no other great scholastic successes. He formed the Uffizi Club for the discussion of art. He walked with the more elegant and intellectual of his associates, talking at much length and frequently bursting into a fiery rage that almost equalled that of his father. A few years later he was to explode into a similar fury when Mussolini told him that he had determined on war.

From Oxford to Westminster was the next and inevitable move, and yet he was defeated in the election of 1922 in the Spennymoor Division of Durham. That was the election when Bonar Law led his emaciated Conservatives to victory against the might of Lloyd George, who had the support of most of the Tory heavy artillery. Mr. Eden did not stay to recover the lost trenches but journeyed to Warwick and Leamington, where he was victorious in Baldwin's disastrous Protection Election of 1923. Three years later he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary—with no extra pay—to Sir Austen Chamberlain, the then Foreign Secretary.

Thus the shadows of coming events become sharper. The young man of destiny had found his current, which was to sweep him on in an irresistible torrent. In the same year he married the daughter of the Hon. Sir Gervase Beckett, and in the course of time two sons were born of the union. In 1931 he moved up to the post of Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office, which meant that he was second in command to the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon. Before long he was to see Simon and then Hoare overwhelmed by events,

and eventually to find himself the supreme head of British foreign affairs.

It is, of course, a story for the films. The perfect sequences call for the camera and the microphone—the brilliant, bad-tempered scenes at the distant country house, Eton with its top hats and traditional suits, the war, the boy lieutenant, the veteran of twenty-two at Oxford among the lads who had been forgotten and were trying to claim a place in the sun, then Parliament, the collapse of the statesmen in his way, the burdens of a tempestuous Europe on the shoulders of a man who is still little more than a youth.

But it is not only Europe he has to face. The Tory party is in a smouldering revolt. More and more they are feeling and saying that the League is leading us from humiliation after humiliation to war. If Eden stands by the League he may lose his party. If he deserts the League in the slightest, he will lose his vast following among the Liberals and Socialists in the country.

In the wings there stands Sir Samuel Hoare, now fully recovered in health. His farewell speech lifted him to heights he never reached in office. The House is already comparing him to Eden and to Eden's disadvantage. As Foreign Secretary, Hoare made the most ordinary statements seem important and dignified. Eden chafes at the restraint of office, and his official utterances lack the charm and the unexpectedness of his flights when he was a Minister without a Ministry.

An old M.P. said to me the other day: "His father was ruined by his temper, and Anthony will be ruined by his temperament."

Last week Eden addressed the Committee on Foreign Affairs in one of the rooms upstairs in the House. The Committee simply consists of any Government supporters who want to turn up and the proceedings are private. So great is the interest in him that the occasion almost emptied the Debating Chamber. Even such old

dogs of war as Sir Austen Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill turned up to see the Secretary in action. Eden's speech (which I must not repeat) was safe, sound and dull. He was taking no chances. Eventually, however, he submitted to questions, and his quickness of wit, his adroitness and his gaiety of spirit were a delight. He smiles swiftly and easily. Sir Samuel Hoare never smiles. The House is not quite decided whether it approves of a Foreign Secretary who smiles.

That is why I have stated that if you can forecast the future of Anthony Eden you can go a long way toward understanding the future of Europe. He has reached success at a cruelly early age for British politics. He is like a thoroughbred sprinter that beats any other horse in a five-furlong race. But political life is a long, long race. There are times to restrain the pace, to slow down almost to a canter, to move up to the leaders but not go in front, to take the lead and then to win by as little a distance as possible so as to save the horse.

Can the sprinter become the stayer? If there are those who envy Anthony Eden his glittering fame I would say, "Keep some pity as well for a man who has arrived too soon."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above prophetic sentence was first written at the beginning of 1936.

## *Mr. Baldwin Carries On*

ALL GOVERNMENTS are born to die. That is one of the oldest of political axioms. And I shall be surprised if the National Government of Great Britain should last out its allotted span.

Stanley Baldwin can ride most storms, but he has never struck such a collection of cross currents as those which are buffeting his Government just now. I had a talk with him the other day, mostly about his trips to Canada, but I felt a real sympathy for him when suddenly he said: "It must be rather nice sometimes to be a dictator."

I knew so well what he meant. As a famous cynic once said: "Democracy is always worth dying for, but of course it won't work." Britain is the supreme democracy of the world. That is a paradox that must be accepted rather than explained. It is true she is a monarchy. It is true that she maintains a hereditary Upper Chamber. It is true that in form and formalities she has altered little since the day of the Stuarts. Nevertheless, she remains the one country where the will of the people is absolute.

Now government of the people by the people is a grand sentiment but it makes governing extremely difficult. Abraham Lincoln was shot before he had a real chance to try it out.

For example, let us contrast Mr. Baldwin's position with that of Signor Mussolini or Herr Hitler.

Mussolini, of excitable Latin temperament, shouts "War!"

A tame Italian press cries "War!"

A docile nation roars "War!" and there is war.

Hitler shouts "March!"

A slavish press and enslaved people echo the command—and the troops are in the Rhine.

Mr. Baldwin says: "As Italy has broken the Covenant, we intend in conjunction with other League members to apply sanctions." At this statement public opinion becomes vociferous. The voices that poor Joan of Arc heard are nothing to those that assail the squire of Downing Street

Lord Rothermere (the *Daily Mail*): "Hands off Italy. She is a great nation that must expand at the expense of backward races."

Lord Beaverbrook (the *Daily Express*): "Get out of Europe and bury your head in the Empire, where you will see Red, the only colour worth dying for."

Mr. Garvin (*The Observer*): "We must withdraw from this terrible situation, because Italy's air force is so superb and our fleet so out of date that our lines will be cut and Britain starved to surrender."

Viscount Cecil (The League of Nations Union): "Italy is committing a crime against civilization, therefore she must be punished and not allowed at any cost to profit by her aggression. We are profoundly shocked at the weakness of the British Government."

The Socialist Party: "By failing to suppress Italy you are encouraging international crime, and by failing to disarm you are creating the war spirit in Europe."

Sir Archibald Sinclair (Leader of the decimated Liberal Party): "I am not in favour of war against Italy, but you should close the Suez Canal and thus end the Italo-Abyssinian war by bringing Italy to its knees."

Mr. Winston Churchill: "If the Prime Minister can remember—that is if he will only try to remember with the same facility as he forgets—he might recall that three years ago I told him that our defences were inadequate."

Mr. James Maxton (Independent Labour Party Leader): "I believe in scholarships, not battleships. What



is the use of trying to protect the lives of people who are living in wretched hovels without decent food or clothing?"

Mr. Lloyd George: "The Government reminds me of a man-eating tiger that is afraid of its own roar."

Sir Austen Chamberlain: "We must only go so far and no farther than public opinion in France."

Mr. Eden: "I would remind the House and the country that our part in this unfortunate affair is no more and no less than that of a member of the League of Nations." (Loud murmurs of disappointment from all peace lovers who want the British Fleet to bombard Rome.)

Mr. Baldwin: "The situation is full of difficulties." The Germans march into the Rhineland.

Mr. Attlee (Leader of the Socialist Opposition): "Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday I shall move a vote of censure against the Government on their deplorable conduct of foreign affairs."

Any Tory M.P. to any other Tory M.P. "Astonishing, isn't it, the way S.B. has lost his grip. This Government simply can't last, old boy."

In the language of a popular gasoline advertisement: "That's democracy, that was." The muddle-headed idealists of Britain are doing their best in conjunction with Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin to prove that democracy will not work.

Those of you who live in Canada may not appreciate at once the political differences of Canada and the United Kingdom. In Canada you are scattered across a continent, with sectional newspapers, sectional problems, and practically no method of co-ordinating opinion except by radio and a national publication such as *Maclean's*. Here in this tiny island everything centres on London. The great London dailies cover the entire country with their mass circulations. Fleet Street (the heart of London journalism) and Downing Street

are five minutes apart, and in that little radius the destiny of Great Britain is decided.

To lead a British Government to-day one must have the endurance of an ox, the patience of a cow, the adroitness of a fox, the stubbornness of a mule and the courage of a lion. One must be a superman and yet not act like one, for democracies do not like supermen. If you ignore the Press you are lost. If you accept the guidance of the press you are lost. There is not one grafter in the House of Commons, but every Premier is opposed by men who see opportunities for power in the throes of each crisis.

I don't know what Baldwin is made of, but his sturdy, country-lane walk is as vigorous as ever, his voice is just as fruity, and he is always ready for a joke in the Division Lobbies. Ramsay MacDonald crashed under the strain. He made a speech in the House the other day of such pitiful ineptitude that I believe he will never speak in the Commons again beyond the mere answering of a question. Bonar Law died after a year of Downing Street. Asquith was pounded out of the ring. Balfour was fired by his own party. Campbell Bannerman went to an early death.

But a few feet away from each other on opposite sides sit Lloyd George, the septuagenarian who shares with Cromwell the historic rôle of dictatorship, and Stanley Baldwin who maintains that the people, for all their muddle-headedness, must be right in the end.

Lloyd George drew his power from the fires of genius that lit his veins. Baldwin draws his power from contact with the soil and the soul of England. Each night when the day's harassments are over he retires to his library, and reads some author who has understood the spirit of the simple people of England. When he gets an hour he walks in the meadows of England or splashes along a rain-swept lane. He talks to country folk, men with quaint and homely accents who know the tricks of

the weather and who till the farmlands that slope over the crest of the hill.

"If I can express these people," he says to himself, "I shall not have failed in my task, for I want no greatness bigger than theirs. I want no fame other than to be an Englishman, and I want no rest more hallowed, when the end is come, than to sleep in some quiet corner of this countryside."

So the last of the great democracies struggles along its course, while the dictatorships of Europe estimate or try to estimate their chances of success against a nation that has as its greatest strength and greatest weakness the unbridled expression of public opinion.

For years I studied British politics from the turret of my editorial retreat in Fleet Street, and thought I understood it all. I was wrong. It is not until you have sat on the benches at Westminster, passed through the Division lobbies, listened to the debates and participated in them and, above all, mixed with your colleagues in Parliament's equivalent of the officers' mess—the smoke-rooms—that you realise the intricate and heartbreaking task of democratic government.

If this Government falls before its time, it will not have been brought down by Hitler or Mussolini but by the free forces of democracy within the boundaries of this little island. And if it is to fall, I wish that those who are most vociferous in their criticism of Baldwin and Eden would visualize the sequel.

We would have a Socialist administration with a bare majority, sustained by the Liberal remnant committed to disarmament at home and to war with every country that transgresses the Covenant of the League of Nations.

"Your policy is bluff," snapped Neville Chamberlain across the floor of the House last week. "You go on pointing a pistol in every direction, but insist that it must not be loaded. Our policy is not to point the pistol

until we have to, but to see that it is loaded when we do so."

Do you wonder that Stanley Baldwin looks wistfully at the Thames as it sluices its way toward the sea, and wishes that just for a moment, a passing moment, he might be a dictator and silence the babel of voices that never still?

# *The Author Defends Himself*

MAY I PLEAD indulgence for devoting this space to the storm roused in Canada by my recent letter to the London *Daily Telegraph*.

Even from this distance I can feel the spray from the waves of indignation that surged in fury from my native country. I have before me more than fifty cuttings from Canadian newspapers. Newspapers of national importance and newspapers of local importance have dealt with me in terms of the utmost candour. In addition, a great number of letters, some enthusiastic, many critical, more than a few splenetic, have found their way across the Atlantic. Let me say at once that all this would not justify this article except that the subject is not only of urgent but historic importance.

May I recall the circumstances of the affair

For some time Mr. Lloyd George has played a mischievous and damaging rôle in British politics. That is not merely my opinion, but a feeling shared by almost the whole of the British House of Commons. His articles in the Hearst press of the United States have proved a national embarrassment in times of crisis, and his speeches on the floor of the House have deliberately tended to weaken the Government's prestige abroad.

It was following one of those speeches that he wrote an article, syndicated throughout the world, in which he first declared that Germany never wanted war in 1914, and that if Great Britain became involved again in war through Staff talks or unwise treaties, not one Dominion would send a corporal's guard to assist the Mother Country.

Remember the European situation at the moment that letter was published. Mussolini's triumph in

Abyssinia was nearing its peak. Hitler had defied the Allies and was watching Britain with the eyes of a hawk. If ever there was a moment for national solidarity, it was then. But first Mr. Lloyd George absolves the Germans of war guilt in 1914 and then announces in unmistakable terms:

"You need not fear Britain's Empire any more. On this issue the Mother Country will be deserted by her cubs."

My voice could count for little against that of a world statesman like Lloyd George, but it seemed to me that my Canadian birth and my membership in the House of Commons justified my attempting to undo some of the mischief. Therefore I at once wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, which gave it considerable prominence. This is the letter in full:

"2nd April, 1936.

"DEAR SIR,—No Englishman with any realisation of history or any sense of gratitude would deny the majesty of Mr. Lloyd George's services during the last war. His indomitable will, his imagination and his gay courage gave a leadership to the nation which could have come from no other source.

"It is, therefore, unfortunate that Mr. Lloyd George seems now determined to destroy the pedestal upon which the nation placed him. Instead of an indomitable will, he now prefers to exercise an indomitable imagination. As for the gay courage of other days it would seem to have altered to a rather unpleasant irresponsibility.

"His latest attempt at the destruction of his own reputation is a newspaper article syndicated throughout the world. Foreign nations quite naturally regard his words as of the greatest importance. In certain sections of the world it is even assumed by the uninformed that he speaks for the Government. In the article Mr. Lloyd

George makes the statement that no nation wanted war in 1914 except Austria, and that Austria only desired a little scrap with Serbia. If that is Mr. Lloyd George's considered opinion, then why did he in the Treaty of Versailles fasten the war guilt upon Germany? Did he make that historic charge against Germany knowing it to be untrue? If so, what answer has he to make to the German people or to the British people in whose name he passed this unjust sentence.

"Later in the article Mr. Lloyd George declares that if Great Britain were drawn into war through the foolish complications of unwise treaties or Staff conversations, that not one Dominion would send a corporal's guard to assist the Mother Country. This from a Premier who saw the Dominions pour out their manhood in an endless stream in the years 1914 to 1918.

"Let me speak for one Dominion alone—the Dominion in which I was born. If Great Britain goes to war for any cause, just or unjust, wise or foolish, no living Premier or ex-Premier of Canada or Great Britain could prevent the young men of Canada streaming in their tens of thousands to the assistance of the Mother Country. It would appear that Mr. Lloyd George not only misreads history, but has completely lost touch with the spirit of the Empire."

Publication in the *Daily Telegraph* was followed by a spirited correspondence in that journal's columns, in which two or three people stated that the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1914-18 consisted almost exclusively of British-born and Americans. The enemies of the Empire are well organised for propaganda.

Winston Churchill told me that my letter was of such importance that he regretted that I had not intervened in the Foreign Affairs Debate with it. He prophesied that Lloyd George would not answer because he could not. Duff Cooper, Minister of War, was another who thought that the letter had done great service.

But all this time, unknown to me, the cabled extracts of my letter were being debated in the Canadian press, and soon I was to feel alternately the support and the contumely of my own countrymen.

Before I deal with that outburst, may I simply state these facts:

1. The act of Mr. Lloyd George in absolving Germany of war guilt was irresponsible and damaging.

2. No one would suggest for a moment that I have any official right to speak for Canada or that I did so.

3. I did not state that the Canadian Government would support Great Britain in a war, nor did I suggest that it should necessarily do so.

4. I merely declared, as my own firm conviction, that nothing could prevent tens of thousands of Canadians coming to the assistance of the Mother Country, no matter what kind of a war she had entered upon.

Now let me reduce that statement to its simplest terms, namely, that in my opinion the pride of race, the sense of adventure, and the instinctive loyalty of Canada's young men would override any attempt to keep them away from Britain's side in case of a European war.

Let us then turn to the deluge. It is impossible to quote more than a few typical extracts.

Here is the *Niagara Falls Review*, a journal which I have not read as often as I should:

"There is a lot of rubbish being printed and spoken these days. . . . His (Beverley Baxter's) statement is just about the same as 'Mother, drunk or sober, my mother' . . . But after all, Mr. Baxter has never been regarded as an official or otherwise spokesman for Canada."

That is a fair enough comment. But apparently in the opinion of the editor of the *Niagara* journal, which mingles its thunder with that of the Falls, one should



repudiate one's own mother if she should get drunk and fall by the wayside. An interesting state of mind—and certainly a warning to mothers.

The *Halifax Chronicle* courteously but firmly declares that I know nothing about it, and says that Mr. Lloyd George is closer to the opinion of the people.

The *Halifax Herald* works itself up into a fine fury, ending its own particular case with these words:

“It might be well to have this ‘Baxter incident’ raised in Parliament at Ottawa—there to be characterised in language incapable of being misunderstood by any person anywhere.”

The *Kingston Whig-Standard* says:

“Mr. Baxter is talking through his hat. . . . He has lived out of Canada for fifteen years. He knows nothing of what the young people of Canada are thinking to-day. His periodical visits to Canada to address the Empire Club and let these Empire builders know what Great Britain is thinking, do not bring him into touch with Canadian opinion outside Toronto.”

An understandable comment. But I would remind the editor of the *Kingston Whig* that I went across to Vancouver only last October, and would venture the opinion that a complete knowledge of Canada is not necessarily gathered by a lengthy residence (and I hasten to add—a voluntarily lengthy residence) in Kingston.

*Le Devoir* of Montreal saves time and space by putting me down as a jingo. There is also a slight suggestion that I am a political fourflusher, but what is that between friends?

The *Vancouver Province*, in its column “News-Made Names,” argues the case with sincerity and logic, but eventually comes to the conclusion that I make it “very very mad.”

The Stratford *Beacon-Herald* reminds its readers that my views were ever kaleidoscopic, and suggests that it would be better for me to speak for my London constituency and leave the Dominion of Canada to speak for itself.

That is a fair summary of the section of the press which believed (a) that I had no right to publish my letter, and (b) that my statements were not true.

But there is another side of the picture. The *Mail and Empire* of Toronto, which has played so long and distinguished a rôle in Canadian affairs, takes the opposite view. Under a headline "Beverley Baxter was right about Canadians," the *Mail and Empire* states:

"If the British flag or Empire were again really menaced, Canadians would flock to the recruiting stations, as he has said, by the tens of thousands. Pride of race and loyalty to the British Throne and British institutions would prevail."

My critics will reply that this is the great Tory journal speaking for Tory Toronto. Very well—let us go to the French-Canadian province and to a Liberal. The Honorable Frank Carrel, Quebec Liberal Senator and proprietor of the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, writes in his newspaper:

We believe if Britain or France  
Were attacked by a military aggregation  
As France and Belgium were in 1914,  
That Canada would go to their assistance  
With the same speed, spirit and numbers,  
As she did in the World War.  
It would not be necessary  
To wait for Parliament to meet  
To arouse our young men  
To fight for a cause  
As they did in 1914.

Again the *Sherbrooke Record* (Quebec) says:

"Mr. Lloyd George has more than lost touch with the spirit of the British Empire. . . . He has been steadily slipping in the public mind until he has reached the point that his frequently expressed opinions are almost totally ignored unless he happens to deliver some such absurd blast such as that effectively answered by Mr. Baxter."

Then there is the *Toronto Globe*, the grand old spokesman of Liberalism. In clear and thoughtful terms it declares:

"It is necessary only to look at the spontaneous response in times past when Britain was in need as proof of the principle Mr. Baxter lays down."

And finally let us quote a sentence from the *Yarmouth Herald* of Nova Scotia:

"While Mr. Baxter may be risking a formal rebuke by taking upon himself to speak for this country, everybody knows that what he says is literally true."

I apologise to those newspapers from whose columns I have failed to quote, especially to the one from the West which said that my election in November was a "freak result." After all my majority was the eighth largest in England, which hardly suggests a fluke.

But the extracts I have given indicate a deep cleavage of opinion in Canada. There is no question that forces are at work, some conscious, others instinctive, which may profoundly affect the future of Canadian history.

If my letter, intended only for English and European consumption, has thrown some light upon these differences in Canada itself, then it has served a more useful purpose than I intended.

With all my heart I would urge my own countrymen to believe in the high destiny of the British race. The Government of Westminster has blundered many times in foreign affairs, but these blunders have never been of the spirit. Britain is groping bravely and unselfishly for a new order of things in Europe.

If Western civilisation is to survive—and Europe is worth saving for its culture, its inspiration and its traditions—then it will be saved by the efforts of the British people. When I wrote that Canadian youth would support England even in an unjust and foolish war, it was to emphasize to the Old World in striking and perhaps flamboyant terms the unity of spirit between Canada and England. Needless to say, I believe that England will never make unjust or foolish war.

And now a final word to my critics, since my case is not dissimilar from other Canadians living over here.

When an Englishman goes abroad he tries to recreate a little England wherever he goes. Even in the trenches, he erected signs "The Ritz," "Piccadilly Hotel," etc. Rupert Brooke put it in another way when he wrote of the soldier's grave in a far-off land "that is for ever England."

Every man is an ambassador for his native country when he goes abroad. If he commits a crime he fouls his country's name as well as his own. If he lives righteously and honourably in the eyes of men he enchances his country's reputation. If, through good fortune or the reward of toil, he achieves a position of some public prominence, then his representation of his native land becomes that much greater.

It is not an official representation. He can commit his native country to nothing, but in a thousand ways he can serve his own people by thwarting adverse propaganda, by influencing politicians and financiers, and by speaking always of the country of his birth in terms of dignity and pride.

Good healthy controversy is stimulating and necessary. Disagreement is the very parent of mutual understanding. But I would ask this question of Canadians through the medium of their national magazine:

Is a Canadian who takes up his residence abroad to feel that he is no longer a Canadian; that he must remain silent if the honour of his native land is impugned; that his absence wipes out his understanding of his own people based upon many generations of Canadian citizenship; that he must bow before the wisdom and knowledge of those whose lives are set in one place, whose thoughts are set in one groove, and whose prejudices remain like stumps in the ground long after the storm of events has blown the forest down?

I claim the rights and duties of a dual citizenship. When visiting in Canada I shall not hesitate to speak for the Parliament of which I am a member. In England I shall not hesitate to speak for the country which gave me birth and toward which I shall always feel the pride and affection of a son toward his parent.

## *Baldwin Hits Back*

A FEW DAYS ago a cynical joke went swiftly through the lobbies of the House of Commons. It took the form of a bulletin which, so said the wits, would be issued by the B.B.C. that night.

“Mr. Baldwin’s political life is drawing swiftly to its close.

(Signed) Neville Chamberlain,  
Sir John Simon,  
Sir Thomas Inskip.”

I make no comment on the taste of the lampoon. I merely quote it as an evidence of one of the strangest battles for power that has ever been fought at Westminster, and as an indication of the state of mind among some of those looking on.

Some weeks ago I endeavoured to portray the forces both of events and personalities combining against Mr. Baldwin. It seemed to me then that he was facing a crisis of such complexity that even he, the professional survivor of crises, could not surmount this one.

To understand the exact intensity of recent events it is necessary to tabulate the rake’s progress—or, as some people would have it, the saint’s progress—by which Mr. Baldwin’s grip on Parliament and on his own party had steadily weakened.

The first step, of course, was the Hoare-Laval episode. When a Prime Minister agrees to a settlement put forward by his Foreign Secretary and then goes back on the agreement and throws the Foreign Secretary to the wolves, he becomes highly vulnerable to attack. There is much that can be said for his actions at that time, but

nevertheless they were a shock to his followers and to the country.

Two months later a section of his own party defied him and defeated the Government in the House on a minor issue. The loyalists in the party called for punishment or at least a reprimand to the delinquents, but nothing happened beyond a mild letter from Mr. Baldwin urging every one to play the game.

A few weeks later Mr. Runciman introduced a far-seeing but contentious Coal Mining Bill compelling the mine owners to amalgamate. Again there was a rebellion in the Conservative ranks. Mr. Baldwin bowed to the storm and said the Bill would be altered. At this the Socialists sprang to their feet and demanded an adjournment of the House. Mr. Baldwin fought them for three hours and then gave in. The Socialists secured the adjournment and the Tory rebels had secured what they wanted, a virtual abandonment of the Bill.

The steps were getting more slippery all the time and it was not long before he reached the next lower level. That was the abandonment of Sanctions against Italy. In spite of the fact that his party was almost solidly behind him in this case, he allowed Mr. Lloyd George and the Socialists to knock him all round the ring without making any adequate or spirited reply.

Mr. Duff Cooper, husband of the lovely Lady Diana Manners, supplied the next drop. Mr. Baldwin, in a public speech, had stated that what he most earnestly desired was a close understanding between Britain, France and Germany. Mr. Duff Cooper, the Secretary of State for War, went to Paris and said that what we wanted was an Anglo-French alliance.

At that time Mr. Baldwin was going down the steps at such speed that it was only a matter of hours before he reached the next one. Lord Londonderry, that combination of British statesman and Irish romantic, issued a statement that Mr. Baldwin was wrong when he said

that he had never been advised as to the extraordinary development of German re-armament. The fact was, said Lord Londonderry, that he himself, as Air Minister, had acquainted Mr. Baldwin with the exact situation.

At that the storm burst.

The newspapers, led by milords Beaverbrook and Rothermere, proclaimed the end. Even *The Times* plunged a knife into the Premier's ribs. Cabinet Ministers huddled in corners rearranging the future.

Mr. Baldwin carried on, facing the surging tide of attack from his enemies and conscious of the receding tide of loyalty from his friends. What was the man made of to stand such a strain? Had he no nerves? No sensibility? Was his heart that of a man or a bull?

Suddenly he was not in his place. He had gone to Chequers, the Prime Minister's official country house, for a short rest.

Then did the hounds give tongue. These many years they had chased him from cove to cove while the sweet discord of their voices was heard across the hills. And now the fox was trapped!

With amazing ineptitude the British Labour leaders said across the floor of the House that he had run away, that he was shirking. Lord Rothermere announced in the *Daily Mail* that Mr. Baldwin was consulting with his colleagues about his immediate resignation. Lord Beaverbrook was perfectly consistent. He always believed that he would eventually knock out Baldwin and here the fellow was—on the floor.

News came from Chequers. A very short statement. Mr. Baldwin had not been sleeping well for some time, and on the doctor's advice was taking a short rest. He would, however, return to the House on Thursday to answer the question based on Lord Londonderry's charges.

That statement of his illness came as a shock. The thought of sturdy old Squire Baldwin lying awake at



night was not a pleasant one. People began to remember that he had hardly ever been ill before. Sir John Simon was brilliantly deputising for him in the House, but we were all conscious of the Premier's absence. Murmurings took the place of curses.

The newspapers, however, refused to let up. They ran articles on insomnia and even suggested that Mr. Baldwin might never appear in the House again. An inspired statement in one newspaper declared that Mr. Chamberlain was already planning a Cabinet overhaul which would strengthen the whole façade, in preparation for an election.

So Thursday came. We assembled at 2.45 p.m., but the Premier was not in his place. Question time, which lasts for an hour, went on, while the glittering Simon fenced and lunged with superb artistry. Where was Baldwin? Neville Chamberlain sat motionless and took no part in what was going on. With an admirable sense of fitness, he refused to take the limelight while every one was proclaiming him the next king. The question to Mr. Baldwin was No. 39. We were already at No. 33.

Then quietly from behind the Speaker's chair came Stanley Baldwin, and walked with his old familiar country walk, to his place between Simon and Chamberlain. There was a shout from fifty voices, then a cheer that grew and grew until it was an ovation such as Westminster had not heard for many years. It would not stop. Instead, it went on and on. I looked across the House and the Socialists were cheering, too—not mockingly but sincerely. The lost leader sat in his place and made no movement. Simon said something to him, and his face lit up for a moment in a shy, pleased smile. At last the cheering ended. A moment later the Speaker called on Mr. Tom Johnston, the Socialist, to put question No. 39, which was to the Prime Minister. With a swift realisation of the atmosphere of the House, Johnston said:

"No. 39, Sir, to the Prime Minister who, for personal reasons, we are all delighted to see in his place."

Mr. Baldwin rose to more cheering. Then a hush came over the whole assembly. What a chance for an actor! Why not a word of regret that he had been absent because of the strain which had been long and heavy? Why not a play for pity or a rebuke to his enemies?

Not Stanley Baldwin. In an utterly matter-of-fact voice he explained that there was no discrepancy or misunderstanding between Lord Londonderry and himself. Undoubtedly Lord Londonderry had supplied him with correct information, but since his figures could not be proved at the time, the Government could not do more than accept them as an estimate which might or might not turn out to be accurate.

He sat down. The Socialists had planned to shoot a dozen supplementary questions to him, but not one rose to his feet. They were beaten by their own tactics. Yet another Baldwin crisis had evaporated into thin air.

But the newspapers were not finished. My old journal, the *Daily Express*, said that the cheering was organised by fifteen Tories under Sir Waldron Smithers. To give Beaverbrook credit, he had nothing to do with this bit of silliness. The good old *Daily Mail* ignored the cheering altogether and did not mention it.

That night Baldwin made a public speech. He said that when he resigned it would be in his own time, and that he would nominate his successor with a full recognition of the qualities required for the post of British Prime Minister. It was the speech of a man in an absolutely impregnable position, and he knew it.

On Sunday, the Premier's Socialist son, Oliver, wrote an article in the *Sunday Dispatch* saying that his father was worth the rest of the Tory Party put together.

Monday, however, held the big surprise. The *Daily Mail*, which had led the resignation rumours and ignored the cheering, suddenly appeared with a flamboyant

double-column story that Mr. Baldwin had no intention of resigning; that he, quite rightly, was going to be master in his house; that he was going to admonish those members of his Cabinet who had faltered; that Chamberlain would not be his successor—and generally made a *volte face* that must have astonished even Lord Rothermere's most consistent admirers.

Thus did Stanley Baldwin by a touch of insomnia score a great personal triumph. No wonder that during the next two days he went smilingly to Henley and to Lord's Cricket Ground, and smoked his pipe with the mental contentment of a farmer who has seen his thistles blossom unexpectedly into roses.

A strange, emotional, illogical people, these English. More than anything else they value a man for the good will that is in his heart, for his tolerance and patience. The man they most esteem is he who expresses in himself the decent averageness of the English people.

Stanley Baldwin will have to resign within a few months. Events are not as considerate as human hearts. But it will be events and not his enemies that will force him to lay down the sceptre of power.

EDITOR'S NOTE : Premier Baldwin resigned eight months later.

## *Whither Europe?*

WHAT IS GOING to happen to Europe? The prophet is always in an advantageous position. Should he prove right he can claim unusual psychic gifts, and if he proves wrong he can say nothing about it, reassured by the knowledge that the public, unlike the elephant, always forgets.

The situation in Europe to-day is so bad that it is difficult to take it completely seriously. I remember once going to see a Strindberg play. The husband, who was in command of a small lighthouse station, was going insane. His wife was suffering from some unknown disease. Word comes that their only son had been drowned. This is followed by the news that the husband is to lose his job and he has a stroke. Then the insurance company in which he has put his savings fails. That was merely the first act. I did not wait for any more. That family was so out of luck that any further catastrophe did not seem to matter.

To a certain degree, that is how we, in London, feel about affairs on the Continent. Emotionally we are numb. Too much has happened to leave our senses open to acute impressions and reactions. Even if a European war broke out, involving Great Britain, we should probably meet the situation with more resignation than excitement. Everywhere the clouds hang low, and one wonders how long it will be before they burst and deluge the earth.

And yet I do not think that war is inevitable.

When I was in Toronto last October I expressed the opinion that the Ethiopian situation, which was then very strained, would not result in a European war. Almost the next day the Italian troops marched against

the Abyssinians, and I was subjected to a certain amount of good-natured chaffing by my Canadian friends.

Yet I meant exactly what I said. There was no doubt about some sort of an African war happening, but I could not see the conflict spreading to Europe. The fact that Europe has emerged from the alarms and excursions of the last nine months without a conflict of any kind is the basis of my optimism for the future.

Looking a little farther back, let us consider the moments of crisis in European affairs.

The King of Yugoslavia and the French Foreign Minister were assassinated by a man supposed to have been in the pay of Hungarian terrorists. There is no race more hot-headed than the Yugoslavs and no nation so inured to war, but the guns did not go off, and calmer counsels isolated the tragedy to its proper proportions.

Dr. Dollfuss was foully murdered by Nazi extremists after an intensive campaign of vilification radioed from Germany. What a moment for Germany's enemies to leap at her throat! In that swirling hour of hatred and frenzy it is a miracle that the blood of poor little Dollfuss did not grow into a torrent engulfing all Europe. But it did not. Once more calm or fear—or both—prevailed.

In October, 1935, Mussolini, in violation of his League pledges, attacked Abyssinia, and for the first time the cumbrous machinery of the League came into action. The British Fleet moved to the Mediterranean, British destroyers watched Italian transports going through the Suez Canal, Italian airmen formed themselves into "death formations," pledged to fly machines, loaded with high explosives, right on to the British battleships, the Italian press screamed hatred of Britain, and the British Labour Party, rattling the olive branch of peace, denounced Mussolini as a murderer, a gangster and a blackmailer. But the aeroplanes did not attack the

British Fleet, and not one soldier lost his life in a European war.

Then came that fateful moment, the most anxious of all, when Hitler marched his horse, foot and artillery into the Rhineland Zone. You may say he was only invading his own territory. That is a legal point. The menacing fact was that for the first time since 1918, the German Army was ordered to march, in order to break the will of the Allies. That was a terrible week-end, with France holding the sceptre of peace in a hand that trembled with rage.

But the guns did not go off.

Let us come, therefore, to the situation as it is to-day, and try to understand what was behind the restraint of Europe in the past, and to what extent that restraint may be exercised in the future.

At the time of my writing this, the League of Nations, as we know it, is either dead or has gone into a sleep from which it is not likely to awake. Perhaps, like Juliet, it will open its eyes again, but if it does it will find that the dream of peace enforced by Geneva has died while it was sleeping.

Not long ago I wrote an article on Anthony Eden in which I spoke of his heavy burden, and forecast a possible change in his fortunes. I did not realise—who could?—that the descent from Olympus would come so swiftly. One year ago he was a knight in shining armour, a dazzling youth climbing the mountains and bearing a banner with the strange device, "The League of Peace." In the recent Foreign Affairs debate I watched Eden sitting on the front bench, his cheeks flushed, his eyes heavy with weariness and his fingers endlessly stroking his guardsman's moustache, while that grand old mountebank and statesman, Lloyd George, taunted him from four yards opposite with every charge from shrinking timidity and a coward's heart to a contemptible greed for office. Eden has a good

war record, but he never faced a bombardment like the one that went on all day at Westminster. When his turn came he spoke badly. His voice was hoarse, his sentences commonplace, his statement of the case for dropping Sanctions lacking in strength.

Yet I never admired the man so much before. Long experience has taught mankind that meteors which flash across the sky have a habit of plunging headlong to earth. Eden had never earned the hysterical adulation showered on him during the last two years. The exalting of him to a position above the very Government itself was all part of that false modern emotionalism engendered by cinema values and headlines. Nor did he earn the volume of abuse hurled by his idolators when the time came to abandon Sanctions against Italy.

Had he been a man of light character as many feared him to be, he could have chosen the moment of the Sanctions abandonment to resign, and precipitate a crisis which might have brought down the Government, and placed himself on a pedestal of virtue from which he need never have descended until ready to become the political leader of all the clamorous elements which are making democratic governments so difficult in Britain.

He did not resign. He chose the dull path of duty and loyalty. He knew that the burdens almost crushing his shoulders would be still heavier—and he knew that his personal influence in European affairs had been terribly weakened.

In that article I wrote that in many ways the future of Eden and the future of Europe were one. That is just as true to-day. It was left to Eden to announce the abandonment of Sanctions, that final death-blow to the League. It is left now for Eden to produce a British Foreign policy which will create some substitute for the babel of Geneva.

Now let me prophesy.

Italian bitterness toward Britain will gradually dis-

appear and the traditional friendship of the two countries take its place. If the development of his Abyssinian annexation proves profitable, Mussolini will continue the rule of Fascism for some time. If, as it is more likely, the economic condition of Italy becomes increasingly serious, I can foresee a strong trend toward the Left as part of the movement which I am convinced is going to sweep over Europe. In spite of all the moves to bring it about, I do not foresee an enduring alliance between Italian Fascism and German Nazism.

France has already swung to the Left, but it is not a wild movement. There is a saying that French policy never changes, only French governments. France is in many ways the most civilised of all the nations, and the least interested in civilisation as a whole. To her the world and humanity are merely French problems. Her chauvinism grows stronger with the years, her understanding of other nations grows less acute. Perhaps all this is because of her fear of invasion, and if that fear were removed French interests would cease to be so self-centred. At any rate she has gone Left, but it is a controlled Left, which will not lose sight for a moment of the interests of French Imperialism.

Spain will alternate, fulminate and fluctuate. The Spaniards are the great gentlemen of Europe and, while their politics move steadily to the Left, their manners remain those of aristocrats. But Spain has sunk so low in international influence that our interest in her is almost entirely academic and historical. Yet she must be counted as a unit in the irresistible trend toward the Left.

So we have Central Europe, the heart of the problem.

Germany is not going Left—not yet. German Imperialism is raising its head once more, German discipline is back to 1914, German pride is in the saddle again, German individualism is crushed and German subservience to authority is complete. What does the Nazi regime intend to do?



Again let me prophesy.

Some Saturday afternoon, for Hitler has his reasons for using Saturday (the British week-end habit is one), he will cross the Austrian frontier to protect the lives of German and Austrian Nazis there. He will act merely as a policeman, but with this difference, when the trouble subsides the policeman will remain.

Europe will tremble and there will be loud claps of thunder. But the deluge will not come. Germany will ask for the return of her colonies, and Britain will refuse, while offering to call an International Conference to adjust the supplies of raw materials. At the same moment Germany will declare that all Germanic peoples have a right to live under the protection of Germany. From that to the reclaiming of Danzig is but another step, and no one will go to war because—mark you!—she is only dealing with territories that were once German.

All this will take time, and meanwhile, the isolation of Germany will have been completed by nations armed to the teeth.

Then will emerge the final situation. Germany does not really care about colonies, but she wants to be agriculturally self-supporting. On the north-eastern frontier lie the rich granaries of the Ukraine, and there the eyes of Prussia are turned in envy and greed. A swift war with Russia while Japan involves her in the Far East? A swift peace and the Ukraine incorporated in the German Reich? Then would Germany be content to have twenty-five years of peace, until, with her massed strength of 200,000,000 souls disciplined, Prussianised and Imperialised, she could turn on Europe and declare her will.

Yet there are two snags to this. One is Russia itself, and the other is a young German named Prince Ferdinand, grandson of the Kaiser, and second son of the Crown Prince.

He came to hear the Foreign Affairs debate the other

day, and afterwards had tea on the terrace with half a dozen of us. He had to leave early in order to fly back to Berlin, where he was to give a first-hand account of the debate that night to Hitler. My advice is to watch out for that slim, dark-haired young man who used to work in Ford's factory in America. They say he may become the next Kaiser. They say he is already a formidable potential factor in German politics. And he has travelled and knows the world. Who knows that his may be the restraining hand in Germany's destiny

And lastly, there is that vast, unknown quantity of Russia, the great bear that walks like a man, the nation that, next to England, holds most of Europe's future in her grasp. The wisest German military expert cannot estimate the strength of Russia. There are those who say that she would collapse against a formidable attack, as she did in the Great War. There are others who say that so strong is her army, so unified her people, so magnificent her equipment, that she could crush Germany single-handed, and at the same time guard her frontier from Japanese invasion.

This much is certain: The political influence of Russia is going to rise at an increasing pace. That influence might be revolutionary, but I think it is more likely to be a controlled Socialism. If she is as strong as people believe, then the German menace will gradually dwindle, and a moderate Left Government, perhaps under Prince Ferdinand, will replace the German dictatorship of to-day.

What will happen to Great Britain in all this? I think she will resume her historic rôle of adviser, arbitrator and guide in European affairs. I think she will resume her historic place and hold the balance of power. Whatever the rest of Europe does politically, Britain will influence it with moderation. And in the end her civilising influence will help to bring about a new and better world.

In believing that there will be no great war, I go against all the evidence. I may be wrong, as any man can be, but pray God, I may be right; and perhaps if enough of us can believe in peace, our faith may reach the faltering hearts of other men who, in turn, will help to bring about that which we so much desire.

## *An Ottawa Interlude*

I AM WRITING this in London after a tempestuous moving and fantastic fortnight spent in going to and from America on the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage, sleeping two nights on a train, two nights in New York, dining in Montreal, lunching in Ottawa, and being back home in exactly a fortnight.

I am sufficiently a journalist to realise that the *Queen Mary* is almost as out of date as yesterday's newspaper, and therefore we shall skip the details of that modern Odyssey. Nor in these days, when young people breakfast in London, lunch in Cairo and dine in Hong-Kong, will I stress the achievement of having travelled so far in two weeks. Personally, in my own earth-bound, middle-aged philosophy I am more than a little impressed, but there is no reason why you should be. Yet it seemed to me that in this hurried and historic trip I learned more about the psychology of the Old World and the New than in any of my previous and more lengthy expeditions.

When we left Southampton the shadows were darkening over Europe. When we returned to Southampton the shadows were still deeper, as a vast series of strikes in France were heralding the first moves of M. Blum's "Popular Front" Government. The Emperor of Abyssinia is in London, the brave little man who believed in the honour of the white man and lost his country. My friends tell me that Hitler is nearly ready for his Austrian coup, while great parallel roads leading to the Rhine frontier are being created with efforts that recognise no respite. The Arab is out of hand in Palestine. Mussolini is wondering whether he has gained a Mediterranean Empire or if his feet are caught in the Abyssinian mud.

Poor Anthony Eden lifts his weary eyes from the map of Europe to gaze at the map of the Far East, where China is flaming into resentment at the arrogant advances of the Japanese. Meanwhile the British Fleet patrols the Mediterranean, and the League of Nations is still making it as difficult as possible for Mussolini to wage a war that is already finished.

In another week these things will seem the commonplace preoccupation of those of us concerned with British public affairs. This is the heart of an Empire on whose troubles the sun never sets. If worry be the price of Empire, Lord God we have paid in full! Of course Ascot is on—that incredible race meeting which functions only on four days a year, but manages to run seven races a day for which the cheapest stake is £2,000 and most of them well over £3,000. But that is Britain, paradox of paradoxes, the undiscovered Island, the unknown country. Time and the onslaught of events leave her unchanged, let the shadows darken over Europe as they will.

But there is another side to all this.

Again and again my political friends in London ask why America does not join us in creating a better order of things in Europe.

“If only the United States would join the League,” they say, “the world would be transformed overnight. With the British Empire and the United States co-operating at Geneva, no power or combination of powers could defy the League.”

It is pitifully true. It is tragically true. Many times it has seemed to me impossible that America could hold aloof much longer from the task to which history was calling her.

Yet this flying trip to America taught me how difficult it would be for any administration at Washington to pledge the United States to participation in the problems of Europe. It does not matter that New York is only five days away by boat and a matter of hours by airship.

The North American continent is as much the New World to-day as when Columbus first set foot upon it, just as Britain is as much the Old World as when the vaunting Roman outraged her shores. Telegraphs, wireless, aeroplanes, cinemas, alter habits but not the soul. When the New York newspapers were delivered to my room and I read of the mutterings and muddlings of European statesmanship, they seemed even to my familiar senses to be the activities of a distant madhouse.

Here in New York was the brave new world where men fought the battles of material progress, where a nation was wrought out of heartbreak and discouragement, where incredible buildings were erected as memorials of victory. Damn it as a city without a soul, call it a ghetto city or a melting-pot or a human monstrosity, but New York remains a monument to the bravery of men. Let me put it another way. New York, as the gateway to America, stands as an everlasting symbol to the excitement and heroism of peace.

I lunched in the top of Radio City with the president of the National Broadcasting Company. Far below us spread the steeple-studded panorama of New York. Like a toy ship one would see in a nursery, the *Queen Mary* was at anchor, waiting to take us back to the world of wooden soldiers and the silly military games of nasty little boys. The attitude of my host was courtesy itself, but how to interest him in a continent torn by age-old feuds when a continent of peaceful development was literally lying outspread at his feet.

With all these things in my mind, my wife and I journeyed to Ottawa to lunch at Rideau Hall. I was curious to see what transformation, if any, had come over my friend John Buchan, novelist, historian and politician. Also I could not bear the thought of being on the North American continent without visiting my own country if only for a few hours. The very journey from Montreal to Ottawa puts one in a gentler and more contemplative

mood. Here is a countryside as rich in verdure and as gentle as that of Surrey or Sussex. It is not like going to any other city I can remember. It is journey's end. One arrives at Ottawa as an author reaches a full stop. Perhaps the presence of R. B. Bennett on the train added to the slight suggestion of St. Helena.

I do not propose to publish the details of my conversation with Lord Tweedsmuir, because my visit was not in the capacity of a journalist. But let me admit that when I left Rideau Hall I felt that I had been in the presence of a man who is going to play a great part in the solution of the problem which I have discussed in this article. John Buchan has changed already. In England he was the friend of premiers and kings. He is no less their friend to-day, but his heart is in Canada.

"What are you now?" I asked him, and he replied with a moving simplicity: "I am a Canadian."

As we walked about the lovely fields that creep to the river's edge and talked about this person and that problem in England and that person and this problem in Canada, I began to realise once more that Canada has a fateful rôle to play in the history of the world.

I am not going to use any of the phrases so beloved of after-dinner orators and write that Canada is an interpreter between America and England, because truths, like women, need new dresses now and then. Canada must be more than an interpreter. She must be a partner, perhaps some day the dominating partner in the union of kindred nations that speak the common tongue of England.

In New York I felt a vast distance from London. In Ottawa, talking to Lord Tweedsmuir, I felt that I was walking on the soil of Canada but that just beyond the fields lay England.

No man lives unto himself alone. No nation lives unto itself alone. On the doors of the Canadian Parliament I read for the first time these words graven in stone:

"The wholesome sea is at her gates,  
Her gates both East and West."

Beautiful words, nobly and serenely conceived. But the seas that lave the shores of Canada carry ships to her ports, and in the ships there are men, and in the minds of those men are beliefs, doubts, ideas, plots, dreams. No customs inspection ever devised can keep out dreams or ideas, and on those dreams and ideas the world is built.

There are men in Germany—not all men—who have the spirit of the jungle and the soul of beasts. There are men in Italy who believe that by foul death inflicted upon defenceless people a happier world may be created for Italians. There are men in France ready to mount the barricades in the name of Communism, and there are men in France ready to die against those barricades in the name of Fascism. Fear, hatred, suspicion, greed and despair stalk like spectres across the continent of Europe. And divided by a little silver channel that now means nothing lies Britain. By day and by night her Government strives for a settlement of Europe's problems. By day and by night the civilising influence of the British people moves toward Europe like a cooling breeze after the heat of the day.

Do not imagine that Britain's task is for herself alone. It is for you in Canada. It is for the men and women in New York and California. Let the civilisation of Europe sink into anarchy or be plunged into despotism, and the plague will find its way across the seas and through any barriers.

These are fateful days for Europe, which means that all these are fateful days for Canada and the United States of America. The greatest danger to mankind is not guns. Metal does not breed. It kills and is itself at an end. But ideas breed and scatter to the four ends of the earth, and there is no defence against them. Therefore, if at



times it seems that British statesmen are groping blindly, following a course without any clear conception of what lies at the end, taking strong measures and then seeming to weaken for no cause, remember that they are carrying the heavy burden which history has placed upon their shoulders. That burden is not only the preservation of the British Empire but the preservation of Western civilisation. As England fails or succeeds, so is the future of the new world deeply and irrevocably influenced, for in the land of the mind there is neither old world nor new, neither barriers nor frontiers.

And as men think, so is the life of humanity and humanity's children determined.

# *We Suppress the Fascists*

THE PURPOSE of this letter is to explain something which must have caused both perplexity and uneasiness to you who live in the outer Empire.

I refer to the riots in the East End of London between the Fascists and the Communists, while three or four thousand police, mounted and otherwise, dashed in and out to see that no one got seriously hurt.

All riots look alike in press photographs, and the newspapers of the world would have quite legitimately reproduced pictures which would indicate that England might well be on the verge of a Spanish civil war.

That, of course, is absurd. Yet it would not be honest to pretend that these riots are of no importance. As usual, events are dominated by personalities, and perhaps if I take you behind the scenes to meet Sir Oswald Mosley, the Blackshirt leader, you will be able to appraise the situation at its proper value.

Sir Oswald Mosley was trained for the Army and went to the war with his regiment, without earning any undue prominence. After the war he inherited his title, came into a considerable fortune and married Lady Cynthia, the wealthy daughter of Lord Curzon.

In America, a young man so situated might go in for yachts, polo, Long Island and Broadway night life. In England he goes in for public life—which is the charm and the drawback of life over here. Mosley contested Harrow as a Tory, and was duly returned to Westminster.

The plodding pace of Tory politics, however, did not suit his adventurous and impatient temperament, and after his next election he sat as an Independent. To the discomfiture of the disintegrating Liberals, he next sat

on their benches, but soon found that there was no future among that army of political echoes.

So he joined the Socialist Party, fighting a by-election, which he won in the face of ridicule and abuse from the popular Tory press. On the *Daily Express*, I wrote some editorials attacking him, which should have made him lose his deposit. Instead, he romped home—which seemed a frivolous and inconsiderate way to treat the power of the press.

Back at Westminster, he sat in the third row of the Socialists, who were then in power. In a few days he had progressed to the second row, where he could lean over and whisper in the ear of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who thought Mosley was a great fellow. From the second bench to the Front Bench was of course, just putting a leg over, and in no time Oswald was there as a Junior Minister.

Fast work, but not fast enough for this D'Artagnan of politics. He spoke well, he had glamour, he had courage and a sublime egotism. He also had that arrested mental development which comes to some men after reading *The Three Musketeers*, or Kipling's adolescent triumph, *If*. I don't think Mosley ever got as far as *If*, but remained in his own mind a musketeer in a constant duel with the Cardinal's guards.

So he left the Labour Party and decided to form The New Party. London was placarded with the virtues of this new organisation which was to substitute action for apathy. Strangely enough, Lord Nuffield, the head of Morris Motors, was one of his supporters, although he withdrew as soon as Mosley revealed his anti-Jewish policy.

With flashing eyes and a torrent of oratory, Mosley led his New Party to the polls in 1931, and had a casualty list of exactly 100 per cent. Unlike Mr. H. H. Stevens' party in Canada, not even the leader survived. Even his candidate in Mile End, the estimable Kid Lewis, former

boxing champion, took the count, which seemed a pity. Had he reached the Front Bench, he would have shown how the famous Dispatch Box really should be pounded.

At this rebuff Mosley took a great decision. Britain had to be saved from the growing menace of Communism and from the decaying Parliamentary leadership which was bringing the country to its knees. Nor was he too proud to look abroad for a model. There was Mussolini with his hand outstretched to acknowledge the greeting of a million Blackshirts. In England the only outstretched hand was the visiting cinema star dutifully waving to England at Southampton, while the only black shirts were those worn toward the end of the week by seaside waiters.

If a Mussolini, why not a Mosley? Besides, England had to be saved from something or other.

It was during this time that I had the pleasure of dining with the Mosleys at their lovely house near Westminster. Sir Oswald's eyes dilate and contract in an extraordinary and, I am told, a fascinating manner. His wife was both lovely and faithful. Her death not long after shocked London.

At any rate, that new phenomenon, the Fascist, began to make his appearance in the streets of Britain. The uniform consisted of a black shirt and grey flannel trousers—an attractive outfit for those who do not run to curves.

On the whole, the British public were vastly amused. There is a tolerance about the English which amounts to genius. The other day in Hyde Park I listened to an orator describe the King as a parasite and accuse the police of being in the pay of gangsters. A blushing policeman stood beside him to see that he was not maltreated.

But you cannot maintain a private volunteer army unless there is an enemy to fight, or at least to threaten. Mosley decided to copy both Hitler and Mussolini. He

announced that his army would save Britain from the horror, bloodshed and rapine of the Communists, and would expose and frustrate the alien Jewish influences gnawing like a rat at the core of British democracy.

Now, the Communist movement is about as natural to the soil of England as a cactus plant; but, on the other hand, the English are a competitive people, and obviously if Mosley was out to exterminate Communism then there had to be Communism for him to exterminate.

So the Reds, who were an inconsiderable number, started to parade to Hyde Park, the national outlet for suppressed political emotions, and the Fascists waylaid them. Then the Fascists held meetings and the Reds broke them up. All of which secured great publicity, so that both armies began to recruit heavily. In the meantime Mosley and his stalwarts grew increasingly venomous toward the Jews.

All of which would not have mattered greatly if the Jewish persecution in Germany had not made that unhappy race sensitive to every additional blow, and if the desperate fight of the Spanish Left against Fascism had not aroused an intense sympathy among British workers generally.

Therefore, these brawling mobs, these Blackshirted Capulets and Redshirted Montagues, took on a significance far beyond their actual importance. And young men began to flock to the Blackshirts in the genuine belief that they were going to save Britain from some dreadful peril.

At that stage, Mosley, with the delicacy of a dyspeptic elephant, announced that he would march on a certain Sunday through the East End of London. That is equivalent to an Orange society deciding to hold its annual parade in Dublin on St. Patrick's Day. There was no excuse for the march, and the East End, which holds an immense Jewish population, threw up barricades and prepared to resist the Fascists.

Mosley arrived, wearing something between a staff officer's and a chauffeur's uniform. He was surrounded by a special guard just like a field marshal or an Al Capone. However, some 1,000 police stepped in and, except for a few broken heads and a broken window or two, nothing serious happened.

Nevertheless, the patience of the nation was exhausted. Rousing England is like waking up a lion sleeping in the sun after a heavy meal. But once roused, the lion goes about its business with thoroughness.

There is a natural dislike of oppressive methods in the Cabinet. There is an instinct against driving any movement underground. There is a feeling that with intolerance so firmly in the saddle in so many other countries, England should not lightly abandon her traditional good temper toward such of her children as become unduly hot-headed.

Nevertheless public opinion, and in England public opinion is an irresistible force, insisted that Mosley should not be allowed any longer to use the streets of London as a battlefield for his toy army. It declared

1. That uniforms for any political organisation should be banned.

2. That, with or without uniforms, the Fascists should not be allowed to march through districts where it was known that such marches would create disorder.

3. That Mosley should not be permitted by these riots to give a false impression of Britain to foreign countries and the nations within the British Empire.

4. That free speech is not the inalienable right of any one if by its misuse a section of the community, such as the Jews, is persecuted.

5. That Mosley, by his methods, is creating the very subversive movement that he would destroy.

A. P. Herbert, the assistant editor of *Punch* and a Member of Parliament, summed it up in a phrase slightly

improving on Mercutio's famous dying words in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"A curse on both your blouses!"

That is the feeling throughout the whole country.

There is no real Communism in Britain. It is true that there are men who walk in the valley of despair and who listen eagerly for any slogan, or clutch with trembling hands at a rainbow. These are the raw material of the agitator. But the roots of political wisdom grow deep in the soil of England, and even men who are without hope cannot easily be misled.

They hear that Russia is a new heaven on earth, but they distrust a paradise which does not allow its dwellers to leave it on pain of death. They are told that Bolshevism is an expression of humanitarianism, but they hear the crack of the pistol as political leaders are shot. Can there be a paradise without liberty, and can there be humanitarianism without mercy?

The heat from the Spanish flames is on our cheeks. The crude *bolero* of marching feet on the cobblestones of Germany is always in our ears. The confusion of France, as she grasps with her Imperialist soul at the shadow of a Communist government, is at our doors. The sterile triumph of Mussolini, who has raised a forest of five million bayonets, sickens and discourages us.

Do you wonder that when Sir Oswald Mosley raises the stiff arm of Fascism, or Sir Stafford Cripps, from his safe retreat of Parliament and the English Bar, advocates a Communist revolution, the patience of England becomes exhausted and all classes cry with one voice:

"A curse on both your blouses!"

## Democracy Speaks

IT IS 12.30 on a winter's night toward the closing weeks of the year 1936.

When I use the term a "winter's night," it must be understood it is in the English sense. You must not visualise snow-covered roofs, with the blue moonlight glinting on the chimney pots and casting deep azure shadows. You must not imagine that there is a hum of telegraph wires playing a symphony of muted strings on a frosty night.

It is raining. That's all. Raining as it did in Somerset Maugham's play, *Rain*. A few minutes ago I put my nose out on the Terrace (perhaps I should have mentioned that the scene of this nocturne is the House of Commons), and was baptised with rain. The blue lights on the opposite bank of the Thames are almost hidden from view by the torrent.

To cheer myself up I have just read two letters from readers. The first one says that he looks forward eagerly to my London letters and is keeping them in a scrapbook. The second one says in brief that I make him sick and he cannot understand why any one publishes such rot.

What can I reply unless to emulate that eminent philosopher, Groucho Marx, who introduced his wife to some reporters and then said: "Well, boys! Am I right or are you wrong?"

I wonder what pleases my friend with the scrapbook. I wonder what displeases my friend with the stomach-ache.

In the end it does not matter much. A writer, a sculptor, a carpenter, a farmer, can only work to his own standards. He must pronounce his own verdict and be-



lieve his work good when the world jeers, or believe it bad when the crowd applauds. Truly, when a man creates, he brings into being his own heaven and his own hell.

All of which has nothing to do with the theme of my London Letter, but what is the value of a letter if one cannot share the mood as well as the thoughts with those who read.

This Parliament is like all Parliaments. There are times when the unimportance of the debates wearies the soul; when men talk to feed their vanity or to fill the columns of their local newspapers; when men obstruct because the debate would collapse if they did not do so; when Ministers use words of action to cloak inaction, or evade the issue like a toreador stepping aside from the rush of a bull.

And then unexpectedly there comes a moment when the heart of England speaks, and such a stillness falls upon the place that the only accompaniment to the spoken word is the sound of Big Ben announcing that another hour has been sent floating down the river of history.

It was such a debate when we passed the first reading of what was bluntly called the "Public Order Bill," but which might equally well have been named "The Rights of Democracy Bill."

In a recent letter I described the activities of Sir Oswald Mosley and his Black Shirt Fascists. It was a matter of engrossing interest to me because I had criticised and denounced Mosley in my columns in the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Graphic*, and it is always gratifying to a journalist to see the cause for which he is fighting prove victorious, even if he is inclined in the moment of victory to exaggerate the importance of his own contribution.

There was practical unanimity in all quarters of the House. From Socialists, Tories and Liberals alike came

tribute to that precious democracy which is called England.

Herbert Morrison, the fiery orator of the Labour Front Bench, said: "Love of country is not confined to one Party. We on this side of the House desire to alter the existing order of things in many ways, but we do not deny—on the contrary, we proudly acknowledge—that, look where you will, there is no country where man's humanity to man stands so high as in England."

One speaker after another, from first-hand observation, told how democratic Germany in like conditions had failed to grapple with the menace of private armies, until it was too late. On the other hand, three or four Members uttered the warning note that we were interfering with free speech and the rights of political sections to demonstrate.

Came the reply: "The rights of free speech do not include the privilege of creating disorder or stirring up persecution against one section of the populace."

And it was then that the debate took its most moving form. A Tory aristocrat whose ancestor helped to corner that old fox, King John, and a former Welsh miner who had worked in the pits at the age of ten, declared that Parliament would not endure the persecution of the Jew in England. One member after another rose in their places and demanded that this foul growth of anti-Semitism should be plucked by the roots and cast aside for the evil and noisome thing that it is.

"Neither by action nor speech, nor by the display of banners, will we continue to permit any one or any section of the public to inflame the passions against a race that had traditionally found a home and a refuge in this country."

My mind went back to six months ago, when an exiled German Jew named Herman Fehlner came to see me. He was big and jolly, and his laugh shook the rafters, but there was no laughter in his eyes. He loved

Germany and was too old to make his roots elsewhere. Two or three nights later he was found hanged in his own room. He could no longer endure the sufferings of his race.

Again, I recalled a recent visit to Theodor Wolff, who, as editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, was the foremost European journalist before the war. For years he had fought for the cause of Liberalism in Germany and a policy of friendship with Britain.

On August 1, 1914, Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Chancellor, sent for him to ask his advice

"You agree that England will not come in?" said Bethmann-Hollweg.

"If you invade Belgium," said Wolff, "England will be at war within twenty-four hours."

"But she has no army. She will be beaten."

Wolff smiled wearily. "Once she comes in, she will never give up, even if the whole of Europe is in ashes. The nation does not exist that can defeat the British Empire."

After the war he laboured for a closer understanding with France. He kept alive the feeble flames of German democracy and supported Bruning and Stresemann when France and Britain would not see the coming menace written across the skies.

So Hitler came to power. One day Wolff was returning from Cologne to Berlin when his friends entered the train at a suburban station and took him off. They hurried him into a car and started for the frontier. The Nazis were waiting at his home to arrest him.

To-day he is a broken old man, a man without a country. He has a son whom he cannot place in work because he has no citizenship. When he says "Good-bye," his tired feet take him toward the door like one who has nowhere to go.

"I ask only one thing," he says in his broken English, "that you will not speak against Germany in my presence."

It is my country and no man can take away my love for my country."

When I was a choirboy I used to sing a chorus from, I think, Gounod's "Redemption": "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" How often the Jewish race must have echoed that cry down the centuries, but never more piteously than to-day.

But by the waters of the Thames the Parliament of England heard it and made its answer.

There is something far more awesome in a democracy roused to action than in any dictatorship. In Russia, in Italy and in Germany, they have raised one man to the level of a god, and in doing so have lowered themselves to the level of slaves. Like prisoners of a chain gang, they march to the command of the tyrant they have created from the womb of their own weakness. Their souls are fettered, their minds dragooned, their independence destroyed. To hide the truth from themselves, they march and shout and proclaim the coming of a new era. They have no more influence over their own destinies than a herd of cattle driven by the blows of a stick toward the slaughterhouse.

Democracy is unwieldy and confused by much counsel, but when it rouses itself it is like the rising of a tide or the coming of a dawn. Nothing can stand against it, for it was no light phrase when those words were spoken: "The voice of the People is the voice of God."

Ten years ago the British Trade Unions challenged the nation with a general strike. The Unions were not revolutionary, they had no plan to overthrow the existing order, but when men let loose such forces of anarchy they can seldom control them. If the Unions had won they might well have been swept on against their will, just as the crowds that surged into the streets of Petrograd in 1917, half in anger and half in holiday mood, never knew that they were raising the curtains on bloody revolution.

But in England the silent forces of democracy rose to meet the challenge. Duke's son and little clerk manned the trains and drove them to their destination; school-teacher, grocer and artist took on police duties and guarded the incoming food supplies; old men from their gardens and young fellows from the night clubs drove lorries and omnibuses; women enlisted for national service in their teeming thousands; and the strikers looked on in dismay as they saw the forces of democracy spring up like a phantom army from the soil.

And when it was all over, Parliament passed an Act limiting the power of Trade Unions because they had proved unworthy of the trust that democracy had reposed in them.

So the other day Parliament, speaking for an exasperated and angered nation, said to Sir Oswald Mosley and his Fascists:

We are tired of your private army;

We are tired of your quasi-military uniforms;

We are tired of your imitation of an alien political movement;

We are tired of your Anti-Semitism;

We are tired of your blustering offers to save the nation from a peril that does not exist.

We shall, therefore, now take that action which should have been dictated by your own good sense. If you want to rule the country, the ballot is as open to you as to us. But until you are returned to power by the free will of the people, we intend to be masters in our own house.

It is 3 a.m., and still raining relentlessly. Oliver Cromwell stands facing the Abbey, a few yards away, and I suppose the rain is splashing from his collar and boots. But I think, in spite of the rain, there is a new warmth stirring in his heart of stone.

## *Abdication!*

IT IS WITH no desire to revive the torrent of gossip, conjecture and dispute about the tragedy of Edward VIII. that I write this letter. I know what a deep personal hurt it has been to Canada, because he was more in tune with the tempo of Canadian life than with that of any other Dominion.

Yet I think I should set down the facts of this unhappy thing, since it was inevitable that, as a Member of Parliament and as a journalist, I should see the unfolding of the drama from its beginning to its incredible end.

Let me admit that no man can read another man's heart, and that the ex-King may have retained a secret there that no one can read. But so far as a close observer can unravel events, this is the truth as it emerges from the smoke screen of controversy.

I refuse to believe, with the sentimentalists, that this is a love affair of such depth that even the story of Tristan and Isolde loses some of its glamour in comparison. On the lady's part, I have yet to be convinced that love is even an important factor.

We should face the truth. King Edward did not abdicate the throne in order to marry Mrs. Simpson. He abdicated because, in his own opinion, his actions rendered him unfit to occupy the throne of Britain any longer.

I am not pleading mercy for him. I only am asking for understanding. When every one in London was asking if he were mad, if he did not realise the wretched fate of an exiled king, he was gazing into the fire, seeing his future with honest, unflinching eyes.

"I have no place to go," he said to a friend a few hours before his departure. "I shall have little money; nothing

to do. I shall brush up German and keep myself busy."

The words might be the innocuous remarks of a business-man half humorously contemplating retirement. But the bitter self-denunciation of his voice robbed King Edward's words of any such suggestion.

In the early hours of the morning, while the skies were still black with night, he stood alone on a destroyer and watched the dark coastline of England fading from sight. Napoleon on the *Bellerophon* was a less pathetic figure. There were still thousands of Frenchmen who would have died for the fallen Emperor. Yet, four hours previously I had sat in a theatre where Edward's farewell broadcast was relayed, and not one cheer greeted the last words of the former King.

A little before that, I was in the House of Commons when Colonel Wedgwood, with tears running down his face, declared that sometimes he would drink a toast to "the King across the water," and the House received it with frigid silence.

The implacable spirit of Cromwell had risen from the grave and entered the soul of a man named Baldwin. The challenge of the King was not to the rights of Parliament but to the moral standards of the nation, and Parliament, as the nation's spokesman, closed its ranks as it did when the threat came from Charles I. There was no difference between Socialist, Liberal and Conservative. Churchill and one or two others tried to raise the cry of personal loyalty to the King, but Parliament turned on them with cold anger and declared that loyalty was to the Monarchy and to a King who was true, not false, to his own throne.

Beaverbrook and Rothermere misread the portents and thought the country would demand the King's personal happiness. They declared in their newspapers that we are living in changed times. They also believed that at last Baldwin would go crashing down against the

personal popularity of the man who was the idol of the people. They could not have been more wrong. At the first cry of a "King's Party" the nation rallied to Baldwin, and whatever hope the King had was gone.

Let me put on record the thought that of the many agonies Edward had to endure, nothing hurt him more than the attempt to raise the cry of "King against Parliament." Much as he deserves the censure of history, he behaved with the sensibility and loyalty of a statesman and a gentleman throughout the crisis. His determination to do nothing unconstitutional ensured his own defeat, but guaranteed Parliamentary stability.

There was one other factor. For the first time, the Dominion Governments were consulted about what would formerly have been a purely domestic business. The people of England looked up with certain astonishment, then approval. Canada was declaring its attitude toward the King's marriage, as were Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Mr. Baldwin was able to say to the King, "The Dominion Governments advise against your suggestion."

The machinery of Empire was facing an entirely new situation, and working as smoothly as if constitutional problems were an annual affair. No wonder that the King gazed at the ring of devoted but determined nations over which he ruled and decided that the end was near. And, as if that were not enough, the Church was making its voice felt in no uncertain terms. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as head of the Established Church, informed His Majesty that he would not permit any of his priests to solemnize the marriage.

Finally, there was the sinister shadow of that most unEnglish institution, the King's Proctor, who had power to cancel any decree of divorce during the probation period of six months after it has been granted, if he decides there has been any collusion or if the applicant



has been guilty of adultery before the divorce or during the period of probation.

Again I repeat, we must condemn the King for the blow he dealt at the true interests of the country, but in human fairness, did ever one man face such a sea of implacable friends? Yet, if he had wished, he could have wrested an immense victory from the jaws of defeat. Once the bishops and the provincial press forced the issue into the open over the ill-advised but self-imposed silence of the London press, the King had only to say, "As a man, I desire to marry the woman I love. As King, I cannot go against the advice of my Ministers here and in the Dominions. Therefore I renounce my private happiness for the sake of my people." One needs little imagination to understand the wave of emotion which would have swept the Empire, and how his people would have taken him to their hearts as never before. And inevitably a reaction would have set in against the Government which might have proved embarrassing.

In assessing Edward's conduct, we should remember that it would have been in his power, any time after the divorce decree had been made absolute, to take Mrs. Simpson to a registry office, marry her, drive her to Downing Street and say to Mr. Baldwin, "This is your new Queen." Such a *fait accompli* would have been most difficult to handle. It is one thing to get rid of a foot-loose Mrs. Simpson. Quite another to depose a Queen.

Instead when Baldwin privately pointed out that the orgy of American newspaper sensationalism was making the situation intolerable, the King told him of his intention to marry. Still unofficially, Baldwin said the lady was not likely to prove acceptable as Queen. It was then that the King blundered hopelessly. He asked for a Bill of Exclusion which would permit the marriage on a morganatic basis. Baldwin then consulted the Cabinet for the first time, and asked for the advice of the Dominion Governments. Of course the situation was

impossible. The Government would have had to go to Parliament and say, "We now offer for consideration and debate a Bill to declare Mrs. Simpson of the United States of America not a fit person to be Queen of England but quite good enough to be the wife of the King of England." The mere enunciation of such a policy showed its impracticability.

By that time the nation was rocking with excitement. Mrs. Simpson was smuggled out of the country to France. The popular British newspapers published pages of pictures and news about her as if out of a hat. Mr. Baldwin was in constant touch with the King; while Churchill, backed by Beaverbrook and Rothermere, manoeuvred into position to form a Government if Baldwin was forced to resign.

In such a situation, the King had no real friend whose advice he could seek. His intimate circle unhappily consisted of intellectual second-raters—people who put social ambition before moral values. For thirty years he had been idolised, and now he was witnessing the *Times* and Lord Camrose's *Daily Telegraph* declaring he was the servant of the State and must obey the will of the State.

Late one night he called a journalist friend of mine and asked him to secure a proof of the *Times* editorial and read it to him. It was a bitter, almost cruel attack on him, while Mrs. Simpson was treated with barely disguised contempt. When the journalist finished there was a pause. "It's pretty hard, isn't it?" said the King.

His world was collapsing at his feet. He stormed with anger. Every instinct in him was to fight; to go down fighting. But to his eternal credit, he determined to do nothing to injure the constitutional cause.

Rothermere was inflaming the public with posters bearing such headings as "Justice or Exile?" Beaverbrook was playing up the right to love. People were cheering untenanted Buckingham Palace. Colonel Wedgewood, M.P., was trying to get other M.P.'s to

sign a memorial to recognise no other King. Queen Mary's position was dreadful. To all inquiries she simply said, "He is King."

The Duke of York was consulted about ascending the throne. His attitude was the same as his mother's. Never was a family forced to fight out a human issue in such a glare of world publicity. The newspapers refrained from any attack on Mrs. Simpson, but feeling was moving swiftly against her everywhere. People, rightly or wrongly, believed her English divorce was faked; that her husband never had deserted her but that the reverse was true; that she was freeing herself from an incubus in order to carry out her ambition to be Queen; that she had cheapened the whole Monarchy by bewitching the King and then making him a butt for the foreign press.

Well-founded rumours began to circulate that skilful German diplomats had found Mrs. Simpson and her circle a useful medium for propaganda.

My own feelings are somewhat restrained by an acquaintanceship with the Simpsons going back a long time. She is not the type of woman that has ever excited me unduly, as her vivacity outpaces her intellectual development, and her eagerness to keep things from dragging is apt to have the reverse effect. But I am convinced she did not want to divorce her husband. To be a king's favourite was to be ranked with many great ladies throughout history, and to be included in the Court Circular was satisfying to the craving for respectability. She would have liked the dream to go on forever. But her husband could no longer endure the slings and arrows of outrageous insult. He is a decent, good-looking devoted fellow, and he had been relegated for many months to the most impossible position a man can fill. He could not have divorced his wife in England as the King is above the law, but he could have tried in America and was being urged to do so.

It was then that his wife decided it would be better if she did the divorcing. The week before the hearing, however, husband and wife met in Paris and nearly called it off. There were tears and protestations on both sides, but she was in the grip of events she could no longer control save by a decision of renunciation requiring a greater character than she possessed. Had she really loved either King or husband, she might have saved herself. But a woman in love with herself and drunk with spurious social success does not understand the meaning of the word sacrifice.

With some knowledge of what might happen, I was horrified when the London press decided not to publish the Simpson divorce. I went personally to Lord Beaverbrook and other friends in control of newspapers, and tried to point out that in their desire to be fair to the King they were being monstrously unfair. How could he judge public feeling with a self-muzzled press? My efforts were just as unavailing as they were eight months ago when I pleaded with one of the editors of *Time* not to destroy the King, who might some day be called upon to save Europe.

Four things brought Edward down: His unexpected weakness of character under the domination of a vital woman. Lack of character among the King's friends. The vulgarity of the American press. The silence of the British press.

So we waited for the final decision. Mrs. Simpson publicly offered to withdraw, and talked by the hour to the King on the telephone. *But nothing could save him. He determined to go to the end.*

Even now I find the words I have just written almost impossible to believe. To throw away the love of the Empire and the belief of a great people; to choose the living death of an exiled king; to wander from country to country like an imported curiosity; to be virtually cut off forever from his own native England; to have

with him every day a woman who would be a constant reminder of his tragic choice

Yet I know his abdication was not merely an act of infatuation. At the last moment he compared himself to his father in whose footsteps he had sworn to walk, and realised in a blinding flash that he had cheapened the Monarchy and brought it into the realm of controversy. He saw the true picture of himself as a king who had shirked his daily duties because of his desire for private happiness.

Perhaps he saw himself in too harsh a light, but he said: "I am not fit to be King. My brother is much better than I." He said the words dry-eyed and with calm voice. But late that night on the telephone he confided to one of his friends that his heart was broken, and uttered one of the oldest cries of humanity: "FOOL! FOOL! FOOL!"

Baldwin came to the House next day and announced the abdication. He did not make a political speech. He seemed to call us about the fireside like members of one family and tell us of the tragedy of the eldest son; the son from whom we had expected so much. And he asked us all to help the other brother who had been called to the Throne so gravely injured in prestige.

Churchill hurried to Belvedere to help Edward prepare his broadcast, but there was one fatal sentence in it. The King said that if at any time in the future he could serve England he would do so. It sounded like a man who had deserted from the front line saying he would give a hand in the next war.

Such, in brief, is the tragedy of that great prince and unhappy king, Edward of England.

He was so well worth saving. In his eagerness of spirit and warmth of heart, he had so much to give the world. His sympathy for the poor was not false, nor his love of old comrades of the War.

History holds no tragedy more wasteful—more pitiful.

# *The King Goes By*

MANY YEARS ago in Toronto, yet so recent in memory that I doubt the evidence of the calendar, I was in a state of simmering excitement like a kettle on the boil. The reason was that I was going for a sleigh ride with my parents and my brother and sisters. Everything was ready. A horse and sleigh was at the door, and I felt a thrill of admiration at the daring of my father who was going to drive.

I cannot recall how it happened, though I suppose there must have been a special edition of the newspaper, but suddenly my mother sat down in the parlour and quietly cried. With the collective sympathy of children we cried too, while father went out and paid off the sleigh, which was driven away by the surly fellow who had brought it.

Queen Victoria was dead.

That great and gracious little lady who had reigned for so long was dead. I cried very loud indeed, although my elder sister afterward claimed that she cried first. Perhaps in our childish tears there was something of regret for the abandoned ride and for the noble quadruped that had been driven back to his stable.

When I was six years old I had received a bronze medal—in company with all other Canadian school children—to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. That was a personal bond between myself and the British Throne which meant something.

In fact that medal meant more than mother's tales of the Queen's goodness, of how she had said that her strength was founded on the Bible, and how her dear, good husband had been taken to Heaven so long before.

Somewhere in all this there was the memory of the

"Boer War," which was one long emotional debauch for us youngsters.

Otherwise I can recall nothing more about the first of my five monarchs.

One of the strangest things about childhood memories is the clarity of certain incidents and the complete obliteration of the others. Nor is there any logic in the selection. Thus I confess that, while the death and funeral of Queen Victoria were etched indelibly on my imagination, I have not the faintest recollection of hearing anything about the Coronation of King Edward VII. But perhaps I had been given a bicycle and the exposed plate of my memory could take no more.

Nevertheless Edward VII. did definitely come to the Throne, and somehow I received the impression that things were rather more gay in that distant Island of England, where it was always raining or else enveloped in a fog so thick "that you couldn't see your hand in front of you." It was a little disturbing to find that the new king was making friends of the French. My brother and I, after much reading of boys' historical romances, had come to the conclusion that the normal future of any British lad was to grow up and fight France. However it was gratifying to learn that the king had been styled the "peacemaker" even if it sounded a little dull. Mother was not sure he was a good man, at least not so good a man as Victoria was a woman. On this I could express no opinion although I felt it unlikely that he was "a bad man," a title reserved in my mind only for Indians and hold-up ruffians.

Somewhere during these thoughts I learned with excitement that the Duke and Duchess of York were going to drive through the streets of Toronto. As they were to be our future king and queen, we turned out bedecked with ribbons and carrying Union Jacks. On the whole it was a disappointment. A mounted policeman, a detachment of cavalry, then an open carriage

with a rather sad-eyed man bowing to one side and a lovely lady in grey and a white hat bowing to the other. Facing them sat two aides-de-camp looking very English, rather supercilious and terribly superior. It took only a minute to pass, and was on no account to be compared in interest with a circus parade. Yet I liked the lady in grey and I felt a little sorry for the gentleman with the sad eyes.

But things were speeding up. No longer was I a child when days moved like long, weary years, and the last week before Christmas was an eternity almost insupportable.

So memory leaps to the year 1908, when it was announced that there would be a great Tercentenary Celebration to mark the founding of Quebec by Champlain. Quebec! It seemed as distant as Hong-Kong to-day. My brother had a plan. The militia regiments were taking on recruits to bring themselves up to strength. We went to the armories, and signed on with the Queen's Own Rifles and were duly issued with uniforms. Three nights a week we were drilled and taught which was one's right foot and which the left, a piece of knowledge that seemed hardly worth the effort of acquiring.

Then to Quebec on a train that was crowded to the luggage racks, and an exciting, desperately uncomfortable night trying to sleep on half a hard seat. But it was worth it.

Quebec was en fête, and the air was charged with history and romance. In the river were British warships, ominously grey in the daytime but lit up at night with necklaces of gleaming lights. There were French warships too, with strange bearded sailors with funny little caps. And there were American warships painted white as if they couldn't make up their minds whether they were battleships or pleasure yachts.

The world had gathered at Quebec, and my boyhood eyes gazed awestruck and fascinated at the spectacle.



Some day, perhaps I would be so rich that I could cross the ocean and see the countries that lay beyond it.

On the third day we had our great march past on the Plains of Abraham, where long ago the fleur-de-lis went down to the roses of England and La Pompadour said, "And what does it matter?"

Being a rifle regiment, the Queen's Own marched past in file, carrying its rifles at the trail. Just before we started, a little man on a horse rode out and went in front. He was "Bobs," the immortal Lord Roberts of South Africa and honorary colonel of the regiment.

At the saluting base was the Duke of York on a horse, the same sad-eyed man who had driven through Toronto in an open carriage. Only he smiled and didn't look so sad.

Not very long afterward King Edward VII. died. My mother did not weep nor did I. After all, he had not given me a medal like the good Victoria.

The *Olympic* slowed down, and through the dripping fog her siren called for the destroyers which were waiting to escort her through the submarine zone. We moved restlessly about the decks with life preservers on, looking like novitiates waiting for immersion. From the bridge came the sharp commands of an officer as the gun crews swung their guns from angle to angle, searching for the peril that might come from the belly of the sea.

We were no longer schoolboys in a toy parade. We were soldiers on our way to fight for our King, our beloved King who had suddenly become the centre of our world. His understanding eyes had looked on us from screen and newspaper. He was in trouble, in need of our help. Something had gone wrong in the peace plans so carefully prepared by his father.

There were 5,000 of us on board, of a generation that had come of age at a period of history when boys became men overnight and tasted the bitterness of death before they had savoured the sweetness of youth. The

fog clung to the ship like a funeral pall and we moved about it like ghosts.

For King and country—and we asked no more than that.

It was in 1919 that I stood on the veranda of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club on Centre Island in Toronto Harbour and watched a launch approach through sharp little waves that flicked their foam across the bow. Standing by himself in the launch was a boyish figure. As he neared the wharf he raised his hand and waved to the crowds waiting. It was charmingly done, sincerely done. There was something wistful about him, something gentle and lonely. And his youth was a beautiful and moving thing which had a spiritual quality that stung the eyes with tears we could not explain. Perhaps it was because we had sent such numbers of our young men overseas and so many had not come back. This boy was the symbol of all that Canada had lost—and she took him to her sorrowing heart.

Thus did the Prince of Wales come to Canada.

Sitting on a balcony outside my London office, my little son grew restive. It was all very well to watch the soldiers and listen to the bands, but where were the king and queen I had promised him? It was a beautiful May morning, and the sun had irradiated old London until it was like a city of gold. There was a shout of command. The soldiers sprang to attention. A great roar proclaimed their coming. They drove past in an open carriage—a beautiful, stately woman in radiant grey, and a gentle-faced man with sad eyes who smiled and bowed to the people on either side.

My little son waved his flag and shouted, “God save the King!” I could not shout for there was that in my throat which made it easier to keep silent.

“Long live the Lord Mayor!” shouted my son.

That is the worst of children. They are never satisfied.

In this manner did King George and Queen Mary drive past on their Jubilee, even as they had driven through the streets of Toronto.

The floor of the House of Commons. It was the first assembling of the Parliament which had been elected in November, 1935. I had gazed at it often enough from the public galleries, but now I stood at the bar of the House, a Member of it, a part of it all.

It was all so preposterously like going to school. There were the prefects, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald. Here beside me was the boy who was always pointed out as the model for the rest of us—Austen Chamberlain. Those of us who were new blinked at the scene and tried to pretend that we were not thrilled.

"Members desiring to take the oath," announced Mr. Speaker. "I shall take the Government Front Bench first."

Late that afternoon I stood in a queue and at last reached the clerk at the table. He handed me a Bible and a form to read aloud: "I swear by Almighty God to be loyal to His Majesty, King George the Fifth, his heirs and successors."

Then I shook hands with Mr. Speaker, and school was out for the day.

A few weeks later, if a stranger had looked down from the galleries he would have seen a strange sight. The Commons was crowded and we sat in overcoats. For once there was silence in that place which is never silent. After a time there came a signal. The Speaker rose and we followed him to Westminster Hall, where Simon de Montfort had held the first Parliament and Charles I. was sentenced to death.

As we lined one side of the Hall, the Lords emerged

and lined the other. The grey winter light began to fade.

Then the great doors opened and the body of the dead king was brought to his faithful Members of both Houses. We received him with the homage due to one of the greatest men in our history. And we received him with the sorrow of those who have lost a father and a friend. Through the agony of the War years, he and his queen had shared the strain and heartbreak with their people. After the War, when standards of conduct were uprooted and a spurious freedom degraded the life of Britain, the Throne remained unchangeable. The sanctity of family life, the fear of God and the dedication to national service were kept alive by the example of the man and woman whom Destiny had called to high place. Not because of what he did but because of what he was, the people of the Island Kingdom took him forever to their hearts.

Yet change begets change, and there was a new era upon us. That night, writing about the scene in Westminster Hall for the *Sunday Times*, I ended the article with these words:

“Once more it was the unexpected that moved us most. It was not the presence of the heavily veiled women, or even the arrival of the funeral cortege. It was the sight of King Edward VIII. standing in the half light against a little group of mourners, whose black clothes made it difficult to discern any one clearly. He is in the prime of life, but in that setting what touched us strangely was that indefinable sense of youth, that wistfully, half-shy appeal which has always made him seem the incarnate spirit of youth caught in the toils of great and inescapable destiny.”

A great King lay dead. A new King heard the clanging of the gates as they closed behind him.

A week later we took the oath again. "I swear by Almighty God to be loyal to King Edward VIII., his heirs and successors."

At last the lid was off.

The London newspapers which had suppressed the news for months, were making up for lost time. The biggest story for a thousand years was wide open at last. The presses ran until the men could hardly carry the bundles away.

Print another hundred thousand! Print another half million! There will be a 6 a.m. edition, a 7 a.m. edition. Chuck out everything else! Cut Spain down to three lines, leave Hitler out, and toss Russia into the wastepaper basket.

Throw that picture of the lady right across four columns! Get a story ready on famous Royal love affairs! Say the whole country is behind the King. This will be the end of Baldwin—I bet you a fiver! Put out street bills: "Justice or exile?" "The King's happiness." "The King or the Archbishop?" Here's a new picture of the lady. Give it the whole back page.

Once more we gathered in the Commons to hear Mr. Baldwin reveal the final decision of His Majesty. The House was crowded with foreign ambassadors, high commissioners, peers and such members of the public as could get in. We knew what the news would be unless some miracle had intervened.

Solemnly the House opened with the repetition of its daily prayer—words that have grown commonplace with us. Yet suddenly the familiar words took on a poignancy which stilled every sound

"O Lord our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from Thy Throne behold all dwellers upon earth: Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold our most Gracious Sovereign Lord King

Edward, and so replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit that he may always incline to Thy will, and walk in Thy way."

"Amen," intoned the House.

Then Mr. Baldwin stood in his place and told the story of the abdication. When that scene passes from my mind I shall have forgotten my own name.

A little later we took the oath again:

"I swear by Almighty God to be loyal to King George the Sixth, his heirs and successors."

In less than one year we had lived in three reigns and sworn allegiance to three Kings of England.

Last night I examined with a pardonable curiosity the Court uniform which I shall wear at the Coronation. Blue velvet tail coat, silk knee breeches, black stockings, yellow dress waistcoat, and a silver-handled sword as sharp as a needle.

My son is profoundly impressed. My little daughter wants to know when I am going to appear in the pantomime. My wife, with that tact which has made me her slave, wonders why men do not dress like that nowadays.

I am perfectly aware that I shall look like Mr. Pickwick at Mrs. Leo Hunt's ball, but I am also aware that in such a crowded canvas of fancy dress I shall be indistinguishable from all the other Pickwicks, Jingles and Winkles.

Some years ago I went to the Abbey as a reporter to see the marriage of the Duke of York to a daughter of Scotland. Her family stood at one side, and their black hair and proud bearing were like the unfolding of Scotland's fierce and sturdy history.

Now I am going to see the bridegroom crowned as King.

He will come to the Abbey, a slim, athletic figure with quick movements oddly and disturbingly reminis-

cent of his brother. But when he stands before the Archbishop he will look strangely like his father.

For he is supremely his father's son. We shall not cheer with frenzy or be so cruel as to surround him with a glamour which removes him from mortal men. The hurt is still too recent for frenzy, and the disillusionment too keen for false aggrandizement.

But I do not believe that he has come to the Throne on a mere caprice of chance. In his heart there is gentleness, and in his spirit there is a vast, quiet courage. As the years go on, guided by the wisdom of his wife, he will grow in stature and in strength—a King whose reign began out of a sorrow of his people and is sustained by their love.

It is a long road back to Toronto when his father and mother drove the streets, but with far more understanding and with the realisation of what this means to us who share a common citizenship of Empire, I repeat the old old cry

“God save the King!”

# *The Story of the Coronation*

IT IS POSSIBLE now to review the Coronation in comparative calm. I use the word "comparative" deliberately, for the multiplication of social and official engagements in connection with the national rejoicings still gives more opportunities for revelry than reverie.

And if it is so for those of us who live in London what must it be for our guests from the Dominions who have been fought over like choice remnants at a bargain sale. When they regain the sweet sanctuary of the sea they are unlikely to emerge from their staterooms until nearing their destination. Such hospitality as Britain has thrust upon them requires a preparation on the part of the recipients almost equal to the training for a boat race.

Therefore if we cannot yet adopt an attitude towards the Coronation of "emotion remembered in tranquillity," we can at least recall it as something that has happened instead of as an approaching event dominating all other issues.

It is so easy to write that Wednesday's spectacle at the Abbey was unforgettable. It is so difficult to find any other way of expressing one's feeling towards it.

Looking back upon it I am more staggered now than when witnessing it. When a masterpiece is being performed one surrenders to the spell of the artist and the creator. Only when the lights are lowered does the mind begin to marvel at the synchronisation which has hidden all signs of preparation leaving only the miracle of perfection.

No normal man has totally evaded the experience of amateur theatricals where after weeks of preparation *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* is performed to an indulgent audience which excuses much



and overpraises the little. Then let him ask what kind of preparation was necessary to produce the magic pageantry of last Wednesday when Queens attended by their train-bearers crossed the stage and fitted into the mosaic of it all, where pages standing in a row like heralds of youth suddenly, with a movement in unison, seated themselves on the steps of the theatre with hands clasped over their knees; when prelates went to their places like pilgrims who had trod the path a thousand times; when Royal Dukes sat like judges and acknowledged the bows of nobles, only to rise in their turn and kneel before the brother who was King.

Add to this total the ladies-in-waiting and all the officers of chivalry with their quaint and thrilling titles, and then recall how each one moved without a second's hesitation until the senses could detect neither art nor artifice in the unfolding pageant of history. We must ask who was the genius whose remorseless discipline achieved this miracle. How many rehearsals were there—twenty, thirty, fifty? Max Reinhardt could not have done it in less.

Yet that is only part of the miracle. Logic tells us that the trumpeters must have had music before them. They were probably bespectacled and respectable burghers of the town, but they played like men inspired, as if the notes they blew were a spontaneous abandonment to the thrill of the moment.

I cannot begin to explain the music. Let the King ascend three steps and the sweep of strings and the choral tide lifted his burdened frame. Let him sit in his chair and the music withdrew to soft, murmuring echoes.

Who taught the Westminster scholars to shout "Vivat, vivat Rex Georgius!" as if they were a hard-pressed garrison of Royalists who had suddenly seen their King riding towards them through the ranks of the Roundheads?

There must be an answer to it all, but I cannot give it.

Consider the Peers and Commoners shouting as with one voice: "God Save King George!" Who rehearsed them? And when? Yet when the Archbishop of Canterbury presented their "undoubted King" to North, South, East, and West, that cry came without a second's hesitation from the four sources of the winds.

The guests themselves were part of the vast and triumphant scene. Did the eye ever feast so sensuously upon such a rich abundance of colour? The white virginity of the Peers' ermine robes was a needed rest to the senses after the stimulus of the other costumes.

Again the perfect touch of pageantry. When the Peers placed their crowns upon their heads it was done without fuss or phantasy. When the Peeresses followed suit the whole play of femininity down the ages came into action. Lovely arms spangled with bracelets, and long fingers, glinting with diamonds, not only placed the crown where it belonged, but smoothed and adjusted the hair so that beauty would not be outdone by dignity. There was nothing lovelier that morning than the raising of that forest of shapely arms.

And there was nothing more poignant than the first glimpse of that lonely chair in the centre of the stage, the chair in which the King would sit and receive the homage of princes and nobles. It said more plainly than words: "Who sits here cuts himself off from the joys and satisfaction of equality. Henceforth he must walk his way alone, a King in a country of free men."

There were hours of waiting for the service to begin, but who could call them "weary"? If one grew tired of gazing at the balconies of scarlet and blue velvet uniforms, of sky-blue cloaks, of a hundred pastel variations in the women's gowns, there would come upon the scene an

Indian prince dressed in such glory of raiment that the pulse would leap into action again as a tired reveller will take on new life with a glass of champagne.

I wish I could have read the thoughts of Prince Chichibu as Bedouin chiefs and Nepalese potentates gazed into the eyes of Ministers from the self-governing Dominions. No Emperor had summoned them. This was no gathering of vassals to give lustre to a tyrant's crown. It was the Empire at the feet of the King whose existence is the symbol of their liberty. Perhaps Prince Chichibu was saying to himself: "Will some one explain the inscrutable mystery of the West?"

It would not be honest to deny that more than once our thoughts went back to the Duke of Windsor who had renounced his destiny. When the Queen Mother curtsied to her son and then received the tribute of her two Ducal sons it was impossible not to feel the mother's heartache for her firstborn who had chosen exile.

Foreigners have expressed doubts about a loyalty that could pass so swiftly from one King to another. In answer to that I would repeat that the greatest truths can only be felt and not explained. The depth and wonder of this nation's loyalty has never been so surely demonstrated as by its transference from Edward VIII. to his brother. What greater calling can man reach than to be a King dedicated to such service?

There has been no attempt to glamourise King George VI. until the very sight of him was too much for human eyes. There has been no attempt to give to Queen Elizabeth attributes other than those which have ennobled women through the centuries.

But I do not believe that any King ever received homage more real and more understanding than when the brothers and senior nobles knelt before King George VI., placed their hands between his two palms, touched his Crown and kissed him upon the cheek.

The people's King! That was the lesson which thrust

itself at us in every one of those crowded, historic hours in the Abbey.

Does it matter that for hours after the service was concluded Peers and Peeresses struggled for their cars without avail? The genius of organisation which had lasted until the final crash of the cymbals had broken down. It was like emerging from a performance of *Götterdämmerung* to find a street organ playing "Two Lovely Black Eyes," but what did it matter? It was the penalty we had to pay for trying to step too swiftly from the mediæval glories of history to the mundane realities of the modern world.

I have failed to describe the Coronation as I would like to have done. I have not even mentioned that gloriously human moment when little Princess Margaret Rose sat upon her stool and swung her little feet and defied all admonitions from her elder sister. But then childhood understands the spirit of pageantry better than we do.

Any description of those hours must fall short of actuality, but I think I can now detect the underlying *motif* which raised that service to a greatness entirely its own. In some inexplicable way the Coronation of George VI., while carried out in the trappings of tradition, became a revitalisation of the national purpose, a declaration of faith in the future, a promise of the nation's immortality. Perhaps that is why those words were chosen to follow the completion of the homage:

"GOD SAVE KING GEORGE,  
LONG LIVE KING GEORGE,  
MAY THE KING LIVE FOR EVER."

# *This Town of London*

"I feel like one who treads alone  
Some banquet hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed."

THESE LOVELY lines came irresistibly to me when I walked along Pall Mall on the way to the House of Commons, and realised that almost the last vestige of Coronation decorations had disappeared.

The Empire visitors have gone home across the Seven Seas. The Arabs have returned to their tents and their wives. The Indian princes have taken their jewels back to the continent that can never be a country. A few Americans linger on like guests at a dance who have mislaid their hat checks.

Once more the front of my Pall Mall club is clearly visible. A month ago it was boarded up like a stockade awaiting an attack from Indians. Instead of its palatial door there was simply a tiny entrance like that to a dugout. Even the taxicab drivers used to scratch their heads and drive aimlessly about like ships that have lost their bearings.

But London is itself again.

A month ago, taking this same walk, I would have struggled by rajahs, sheikhs, ambassadors, Canadian "Mounties," Australian "diggers," Argentinos and ebony kings from the Gold Coast.

To-day all the men that I see—and Pall Mall is the last citadel of the male—are English and are wearing grey toppers and morning coats. Ascot is on—that mysterious festival where between the intervals of the fashion parade seven horse races are run each day for a minimum prize

of £1,000. Many of the races are worth three or four times that amount.

Where but in England could Ascot take place? The most beautiful turf in the world, the biggest prizes, the loveliest lawns and terraces and stands—for exactly four days racing in the year. The other 361 days it stands a silent monument erected in memory of woman's adornment and of the gamblers who lost.

It is the King's Meeting, of course, and that means the Royal Enclosure where you cannot get in unless you are somebody, and even then you are barred if you have ever been in a divorce case. So the nobs in the Royal Enclosure look over the railings at the snobs on the adjacent lawns, and both gaze directly opposite at *hoi polloi* who see the racing for nothing and do not have to produce their marriage certificates before backing a loser.

England is herself again.

How I love this town of London! This has been a flaming June. Day after day the sun has gilded the ancient buildings with its radiance, until age has turned to youth and London, like Faust, has changed from the dignity of an old man to the eager charm of a lover.

I wish you could stand with me for a moment at the head of the Duke of York's steps and take in this view, this magic sweep across the Mall to the spires of the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. There is a strange suggestion of turrets and minarets as if we were in some city of the East. But Robert Louis Stevenson called London the "Baghdad of the West," didn't he?

London . . . you have never looked more beautiful than to-day, more clothed in mystery and the deepening colours of history.

Now I must stop a moment and chat with my friend, Stubbs. Stubbs draws pictures with coloured chalk upon the pavement, and lovely things they are too. Stubbs was blown up in the War and his hand shakes badly except when it holds the chalk, when it becomes strangely calm.

He knows Baldwin and MacDonald and W. R. Hearst—a strange collection. Stubbs is rather worried about Baldwin being no longer Premier, but I have promised to keep my eye on Chamberlain and he seems more content.

Stubbs tells me that when it is warm and sunny like to-day people are free with their money, but when it is cold and wet and he needs hot drinks and dry clothes they are very slow to give it.

We agree that it is a queer world. He says that to-morrow he is going to try something new with his chalk, a mill stream with drooping willows. He is disappointed with his work to-day; in fact he has never been the same since the extra traffic of the Coronation through his studio rather put him off his stroke.

He has something of Corot's feeling for trees, has ex-Gunner Stubbs of the British Army.

You have no idea what it was like being in London this spring. Now that it is over, we are only realising what we have been through.

Everybody exhorted everybody else to show real hospitality to our visitors from the Empire. So the India Office and the Admiralty and the Empire Society and Mr. Speaker and the Foreign Office, and I do not know who or what else, gave huge receptions and asked everybody to them. All the big hostesses gave balls or receptions. The rest of us had dinner parties, and the poor telephone system almost broke down completely under the strain.

So did we. So did the overseas visitors. My brother-in-law, Colonel Harry Letson, of Vancouver, was staying with us. Or at least I think he was staying with us, for twice I met him going out as I was coming in, and no less than three times I met him coming in as I was going out. He has gone now. That is too bad because there was something I wanted to say to him, I think.

He was almost a shadow when he went. The com-

petition to secure a Canadian for a party had become almost indecent. Being a kindly fellow, he went to five or six affairs a night. His ambition was to get it up to ten, but unfortunately he got a night behind and had to abandon it.

Coming from the Speaker's reception, I drove away in the car of one of my colleagues in the House. He was half asleep, but determined to go on to a reception at Lord Snook's in Grosvenor Square. We were proceeding on our way when he saw a lot of cars lined up outside a stately mansion, and hammered on the window to his chauffeur.

"Good-night, Baxter," he said. "My car will take you on."

"But this is not Grosvenor Square," I said. "It is Berkeley Square."

"Oh, well," he answered. "It will do."

The last thing I saw of him he was going into the house which belonged to somebody but certainly not Lord Snook.

Now London is, itself again. All that is left are the natives. . . . Well, not quite . . .

Here is my old friend, Ian Mackenzie, the Canadian Minister for Defence. He made a speech at my wedding in Vancouver, and now he is making speeches at the closing sessions of the Imperial Conference.

He looks imposing but serious. I wonder why Canadian public men so often look serious?

I saw Mr. Mackenzie King last night in Mr. Vincent Massey's box at Covent Garden. The opera was *Siegfried*, and with the exception of the gorgeous and voluptuous last act, it is pretty heavy going. I never knew that Canada's Premier was a Wagnerite. Mr. King is an exception to most Canadian public men. He smiles easily—but perhaps it is from thinking of the present condition of the Conservative Party in Canada.

But two swallows do not make a summer. London



is itself again. The Captains and the Kings (excepting Mackenzie) have departed.

Just a moment. Their Honours Dr. Herbert Bruce and Mr. Eric Hamber, Lieutenant-Governors of Ontario and British Columbia, were dining at the House of Commons a couple of nights ago. It is rather fun dining there. You meet on the Terrace for cocktails and watch the barges go by; then you dine in a room where the indicator shows who is speaking upstairs.

There is something strangely soothing about dining with good company and knowing that some one is speaking upstairs.

The two Lieutenant-Governors, I am glad to report, have stood the strain amazingly well. After a quiet summer at home in Canada there is no reason why, by September, they should not both be as good as new.

I remember Eric Hamber when he used to play hockey for the Dominion Bank in Toronto back in the reign of Edward VII. That early physical training has no doubt stood him in good stead for this trip.

We do not grow old with the years but by moments. A sudden sorrow or a sudden joy, a great thought or a swift responsibility, and we are older than we were. The first touch of frost which plunges the Canadian countryside into leaves of blood red is not more sudden than the moments in life which mark our progress along the path of life.

The greatness of cities comes, as well, from their moments rather than their years.

You cannot go to Paris to-day without seeing two things on every hand—the revolution and Napoleon. The day that they struck off the head of Marie Antionette coloured forever the face of Paris. And the ghost of Napoleon, marching through the Arc de Triomphe, is nearer to life to-day than men like Foch and Poincaré, whose voices have been stilled for so short a time.

History is not the record of the years but of great or tragic moments.

London is paved with history. One would have thought that the brush of the historian could add nothing more to the canvas.

Yet the Coronation of King George VI. has left its legend richer than ever before, and has added dignity and strength to its mighty soul. There is no city in the world that can rise to greatness like this monster metropolis with its crooked regiments of streets and lovely parks, its swirling, untidy river, its age-old buildings that defy the years, its broad humanity, its dignity, its sense of the past and its challenge to the future.

The moments of London! What sights she has seen, what shameful things and what magnificence!

Events had made the Coronation of King George VI. a ceremony of peculiar significance to the people. Science made the people part of it all.

The King spoke in the Abbey, and his words were heard by the millions lining the streets.

It is an oft-told story now, like an old wives' tale. But I feel that this Coronation was one of London's greatest moments. When the funeral of Victoria or the crowning of Edward VII. is forgotten, I have a feeling that this year's Coronation will still be spoken of with awe and wondering. History with its unfailing instinct for the dramatic will see in it the crowning of the first "People's King" of Britain, the crowning of the first King of Canada and her sister Dominions, the crowning of the first King in the history of our race who was called to his high estate by the needs of the people and neither by intrigue nor the hand of death.

I had not intended to write on the Coronation. What I really set out to do was to describe the strangeness of London being itself again, with all the guests gone home and only the English (and the Scots) left to ruminate upon it all.

## Chamberlain's Mistake

THE HERO OF this story is Mr. Neville Chamberlain. What the end of it may be no one can foretell.

And all this because Mr. Neville Chamberlain, "the man with no sense of drama," has brought on his head the curses of the financiers, the protests of the industrialists, the open opposition of his supporters, and the sneers of those critics who always maintained that he was at heart a local councillor not fitted for the metropolitan stage of Westminster.

When you read this you will be able to fill in the details which are not yet available to me. I merely describe the situation as it was on the eve of the Coronation.

The annual Budget in Britain is something between a gigantic guessing game and a Cup Final. The people enter it with zest, and in every "pub" the beer drinkers discuss the prospects to the exclusion of other topics. To forecast the size of the deficit or to pick the new taxes gives the man in the bar parlour as much satisfaction as picking the winner of the Derby.

In the House of Commons every one becomes an amateur chancellor. The year's financial statement is studied in odd corners of the libraries and from it the M.P.'s estimate the income and expenditure of the next year. It is the favourite spring game of the frisky old Mother of Parliaments.

On the Sunday before the Budget the newspapers all feature forecasts by experts, including ex-chancellors like Winston Churchill and the late Lord Snowden. The *Sunday Graphic* invited me to be its expert and, since nothing seems surprising after the cinema business, I took on the task with a sort of modified rapture. It was hard

work but it was fun. Other people's millions are nice toys to handle, and when I had finished prophesying the increases in expenditure and revenue and added them up (the addition came right the third time, which I think is a tribute to Harbord Street Collegiate, Toronto), I guessed that Mr. Chamberlain would be faced with a deficit of a mere £2 millions.

The only direct increase in taxation I had put in was another 3d. on the pound. And only a £2 millions deficit! With a flourish of the pen I called the article, "Mr. Chamberlain's Great Chance," and ended it with the immortal words: "I believe that Mr. Chamberlain next Tuesday will give us a cheerful Budget and that the pessimists will be confounded."

Immensely cheered by this decision, I bought some more industrial shares, entered a golf competition and drove out of bounds three times in the first three holes. After all, a man who can hit a ball in only one direction shows lack of imagination.

On Sunday I was interested to find that Mr. Churchill was also optimistic and forecast a cheerful Budget. I did not feel as clever as I had done, but my satisfaction was even deeper.

On Monday, the day before the Budget, the stock market, which had been staggering under the blows of President Roosevelt's soliloquies on gold, staged a moderate recovery. All the experts could not be wrong and spring was in the air.

In the meantime the Iron Chancellor was closeted over the week-end in his house at No. 11 Downing Street. His sweet wife sat admiringly holding the pens like David Copperfield's Dora. In her eyes Neville could do no wrong, and in his eyes there was nothing in life so sweet as this woman who loved him like a child, a wife and a mother.

Now, at this stage, I must ask you to note one of our quaint English customs.

Mr. Eden can fashion foreign policy, but in all matters of emergency or major policy he consults the Cabinet. This is what is known as collective Cabinet responsibility. It applies to all Ministers in matters of major policy.

But the Budget is the concern of only one Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Not another Minister, not even the Premier, knows what he is up to. It is understood, of course, that he will reveal his Budget to the Cabinet just before he brings it to the House of Commons, but the Cabinet do not criticize or alter. They are just plain "yes" men.

Last year Mr. Chamberlain revealed his secrets a week before Budget Day, with the result that some one talked in his sleep and Mr. J. H. Thomas and Sir Alfred Butt resigned from Parliament—a scandal that had an element of pity in it.

This year Mr. Chamberlain did not open Pandora's Box until the night before the Budget. The Cabinet gazed at the secret gems and turned their eyes away. No one talked in his sleep.

Next day we turned up in force, for there are no absentees on Budget Day. Foreign ambassadors, Peers of the Realm, and members of the public crowded every inch of the space.

There was more than the usual sense of history that always hovers like a low-lying mist over the palace on the Thames. This was to be Mr. Chamberlain's sixth and last Budget. He had taken on the nation's finances in the crash of 1931, and now he was to hand over a vigorous and healthy Britain to his successor while he prepared to move into No. 10 Downing Street, where his wife would say: "Welcome to your new home, Mr. Prime Minister," and they would both smile because it is human to be happy when the summit is reached.

Only one thing disturbed me. During the preliminary question hour Mr. Chamberlain stood unperceived

behind the Speaker's chair and looked grimly ahead of him. Likewise the Cabinet sat and stared into space. Had something gone wrong? Had the "experts" blundered?

At 3.45 p.m. Mr. Chamberlain rose in his place to cordial and apprehensive cheers. I have never seen him so vital or so sure of himself. His voice, which is not resonant, easily filled the House. As per custom, he reviewed the nation's finances for three-quarters of an hour, because nothing must be said about the next year's plans until the Stock Exchange is closed.

But what a story he told in that forty-five minutes! What is there in the soil of this little country, in the hearts and heads and hands of this people that makes them dominate the world in production, in finance, in shipping, in courage, in endurance and in imagination?

"Think what a Budget I could have introduced to-day," said the Chancellor, "if the armaments race of Europe had not forced us to undertake the tremendous defence expenditure to which we have set our hand."

That was the only reference he made to the bitterest disappointment of his life. What a thrill to have taken the nation in six years from the swamplands of economic collapse to the firm uplands of financial recovery, and to be able to say: "I lay down my task as Chancellor because it is now completed and to mark the end of the story I announce a reduction of £30 millions in taxation."

Let his severest critic pause for a moment and savour the cruel disappointment that was in Neville Chamberlain's heart at that hour.

4.30 p.m.

"Now," said the Chancellor, "we must face next year with all its implications."

Suddenly his austerity changed into an unexpected gaiety. He told us that many correspondents had tried to solve his difficulties for him. Here were some of the suggestions: An increased tax on beer ("Quite right,

too!" from Lady Astor), a tax on bachelors (loud cheers from all married M.P.'s), a tax on cosmetics (cries of "Shame!" and much laughter from the 200 bachelor M.P.'s). The game went on until we were all roaring with laughter.

Never had we seen the Iron Chancellor in so buoyant a mood. "It's not even going to be 3d. on the income tax," said the chap next to me. I wished that I had bought more securities.

Still smiling, Mr. Chamberlain began his estimates. Trade was good and he counted on income tax, even without any increase, giving him another £12 millions, super-tax another £2 millions or so, and death duties so much more.

Nevertheless he would have to increase the income tax by 3d., which "will, after all, make it the nice round figure of five shillings in the pound instead of four and ninepence."

He paused. His deficit was now only £2 millions. He spoke of it with almost affectionate contempt. What was a miserable £2 millions in a Budget of nearly £1,000 millions? His attitude toward it was like that of a man who has carried a grand piano upstairs and finds that he has still to pick up his collar stud. It was a 100 to one that he would leave the deficit to the chance of a boom Coronation year.

And then came one of the biggest Budget shocks in British political history.

"It is only fair," he said in effect, "that those who are making profits out of our armament expenditure and are benefiting directly or indirectly from it should contribute to a National Defence Fund. I propose a special profits tax whereby all companies and firms whose profits are more than £2,000 a year shall take as their standard the average of the years 1933-34-35, and shall pay me a percentage of their increase above that figure, rising to as much as thirty per cent for those

companies whose profits exceed a fifteen per cent increase."

In simple terms, that was a condensation of what he said. A terrible silence gripped the House. A Socialist laughed and pointed at the grim faces of the Tories.

"As it gradually becomes operative," said the Chancellor, "I estimate that it will produce £2 millions this year and £25 millions the next."

With a few more words he ended his speech and sat down. Without a cheer, the Government supporters began to file out.

In the lobbies there was an angry outburst from the bewildered Tories. Everywhere one could hear: "Incredible!" "Insane!" "This is Communism!" "It won't work!"

So the excited chatter went on. Then the ugly word, "unjust," took the place of all the others. I went to my office to consider with Lord Kemsley on the attitude of our newspapers toward it. That most chivalrous and considerate of all newspaper proprietors looked at me with a rueful smile: "This is going to be difficult for Neville," he said, "but how splendid of him to take this unpopularity on his own shoulders instead of leaving an impossible task to his successor."

The next morning there was a wild break on the Stock Exchange. Values fell by a hundred millions, by two hundred millions. As luck would have it, the brokers' accounts arrived in the morning post. I looked at the prices of the shares I had bought, now ten or twelve points down.

At noon I lunched with a friend of mine who is a man of means. "I am cleaned out," he said. "I shall have to start life over again."

Lord Grenfell, who gave up the army for a financial career a few months before, strolled over. "I have been working on all this night with my slate and pencil," he



said. "According to my figures, Neville will get £800 millions the first year and £2 billions the next. So we ought to get our income tax refunded."

We laughed. So did a lot of people. There was something grimly funny about it.

Two nights later a harassed debate reached its climax. For two days he had stood bombardment from finance, industry and sustained attack from his own supporters in the house. Sir Robert Horne, once Chancellor, and now one of our greatest industrialists, had riddled the profit tax from top to bottom in debate. It was an excellent idea, he said, to set a trap for companies making armament profits by taxing their increase over the standard of 1933, 1934, and 1935, when armaments were not doing well, but the trap set for those companies would catch the shipping firms emerging from years of bad trade. It would catch rubber companies which had paid no dividends for years and were at last seeing daylight. It would penalise gold and copper companies whose properties and shareholders were in colonies but whose boards sat in London. It would warn all such companies not to be registered in London, and thus boards would sit elsewhere and there would no longer be an inducement to give orders for equipment to British factories. It would penalise new companies starting up which would need their profits for reserve. On the other hand, tobacco combines and chain stores which make huge profits always, would be able to conceal any appreciable increase and thus contribute nothing to the tax.

I joined in the hunt with the others, and urged an increase of the company income tax on all industry rather than try to work a plan that was "ill-considered, unfair, and confiscatory in character." So the dingdong went on, and markets sagged, collapsed, got up, fell down, then remained steady like the drunkard who has embraced a friendly lamp-post.

Half defiant and more than a little hurt, Neville Chamberlain faced his critics. This was his army in revolt, the army that he had so soon to lead. The legend of financial superman had faded. There was no one to shout "*Vive l'Empereur.*" Quietly he reviewed various criticisms that had been made. He said the panic in the stock market had been grotesquely overdone. He said the principle of his tax was right. And then suddenly the Iron Chancellor showed that he was only human.

"Under the conditions of secrecy," he said, "which are imposed on the man who makes the budget, I had not the chance to discuss the profits tax with leaders of industry as I would have liked to have done."

It was more than a little pathetic. The mask was off and the chancellor was no longer the infallible genius who required no advice more expert than his own mind could give. He would not abandon the tax, but would see that there was no injustice done. There would be this concession and that concession, this adjustment and that alteration. Socialists jeered and shouted that he was in full retreat from his own supporters.

The Government pack heard his statement quietly, but asked for further assurances. And as I write this article, there it rests. The stock market, a little ashamed of itself for its hysteria, is recovering confidence. My securities are rearing their heads gingerly, like soldiers in a trench after a shell has gone by. The mad speculation that was going on has been checked. Mr. Chamberlain is still considering concessions and alterations, but will not abandon the tax. Is it possible he foresaw the reaction to his proposals and was determined to bring about the stockmarket slump in order to prevent a real crash later on? I do not think so. In my opinion he was precipitate, and it will be difficult for him to recover his prestige, but am I right? I was wrong about the cheerful budget. I was wrong when I backed myself to win the Carlton

Club golf handicap. Is it possible I am wrong about Mr. Chamberlain, too? Well, at any rate, I have told you all about it, and you ought to know the answer by the time this appears in print.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The tax was withdrawn and reintroduced in a new form. Everybody—and honour—was satisfied.

## *Baldwin's Good-Bye to Bewdley*

THE OTHER Saturday my wife and I had an experience which I would like to share with my readers. It is possible it may not interest you very much. In that case I hope you will tell me.

All I can claim is that the adventure will remain in my memory until, as an old man, I sit by my fireside and tell the younger generation those stories of long ago which have bored young people since the world began.

Whether you live in Vancouver, Toronto, Calcutta or London, you form fixed habits. On Saturdays it is my invariable custom to slice, hook and shank a golf ball twice around the course. Then a rubber or two of bridge and it is time for dinner.

Thus does Saturday whirl by in a cloud of exasperation, frustration and, at bridge, a deep and abysmal misunderstanding with my partner. By this means does a man fit himself to return on Monday to the spiritual luxury and peace of mind of his normal occupation.

It was, therefore, with mixed feelings that I received a telephone call from my friend the editor of the *Sunday Times*. "Next Saturday," he said, "Mr. Baldwin is going to Worcester to meet his constituents for the last time. He is certain to announce his coming retirement, and it ought to give you something to remember and write about."

So at ten o'clock on the next Saturday morning, my wife and I boarded the train at Paddington Station and started for Mr. Baldwin's county town.

It was one of those breath-taking spring mornings that make one feel that heaven and earth had met for an hour in England. The golden sunlight touched the countryside with a hundred shades of green. The valleys

were lit with the pale radiance of primroses like night lights fading with the dawn. And the plum trees were rich with blossom.

Past Oxford the broken hills of Malvern began, giving to the scene that sylvan and pastoral effect which makes Worcestershire men in their London drawing-rooms almost decide to go back and stay there forever. Country houses studded here and there against the rising slope, slumbering in the sun; tiny lambs frisking about but keeping a watchful eye on their next meal as she crunched the grass. Peace and a deep abiding serenity—England.

Am I boring you? Oh, well, we are going through the Evesham Valley now and we shall soon be at the county town of Worcester.

So this is Worcester, where the Worcestershire sauce comes from. It is too early for lunch, so let us go for a walk.

Up this same road marched Cromwell when, after a cruel siege, he routed the son of Charles I., who left 4,000 dead behind him. Never mind. When the young man came back as Charles II., he gave the citizens the motto "*Civitas Fidelis*."

Every cobblestone has a story to tell. Here the Danes fought to subdue the town. I forget now if they succeeded, but at any rate they are not here now, so it does not matter. Richard I., on one of the few occasions that he stayed at home in England, gave Worcester its municipal charter. Down this road walked the sandalled feet of the good St. Dunstan.

At about this time my wife remarked that history was all very well in its proper place but the question was—where would we find a good inn for lunch? We found it down a turning—coach yard, Elizabethan windows, snug little bar, beamed ceilings and all. A pleasant, buxom landlady gave us the menu, which offered us the choice of soup, roast lamb and rhubarb with custard, or soup, roast lamb and rhubarb with custard. We took it

all and it was good. Believe me, it was good. No wonder Cromwell and the Danes wanted to capture Worcester. Where else would they get lamb like that? A deep and abiding peace came over me, as well as England, and I would have liked to sleep and dream of the days when Elizabeth drove past the door (yes, she was here, too), but my wife reminded me that the meeting would soon be starting at the Guildhall and we had better make sure of our places. Women are not so easily deflected by the centuries.

The sun was still shining as we neared the Guildhall, which was erected in 1723. It has probably been rebuilt since then, but the English don't count restorations as of any importance. We were an hour early, which was probably just as well as people were already arriving armed with red tickets.

This was a dilemma. I had no ticket of any colour. Further inquiries revealed the fact that this was not a public gathering at all but the annual general meeting of the Bewdley Conservative Association, whose member was Mr. Stanley Baldwin, M.P. Fortunately the agent came to my rescue, and we were given two aisle seats four rows back from the front.

It was a great, imposing room, with the walls covered by life-size portraits of former mayors—full-bearded fellows in their robes who looked as if they had not only ruled Worcester with an iron hand but kept their women at home in their proper place.

But Mr. Baldwin's supporters were arriving. Apple-cheeked women with wisps of fur around their necks and vintage hats. There were shy, leggy boys home from boarding school, strong-minded aunts, and purple-faced old boys with seventy years of hard riding and glorious drinking behind them. Here and there was a frightened lovely face of a young girl, sandwiched between the hawk features of a local solicitor and the jolly plumpness of the family physician.

This was England, Conservative England, rural England—the England that has ruled for generations and still rules. I began to feel smaller and smaller as if, like Alice, I had nibbled a bit of mushroom.

Now it was 3.25 o'clock and the place was full. Anxious stewards darted in and out like minnows in a stream. A photographer mounted the platform and pointed his camera at us.

"If it pleases you!" he announced with great courtesy. It pleased us and he bowed. "I thank you," he said. We indulged in a slight smile of condescension and gratification. We knew we were supers in a little pageant of history.

Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin came in. We all stood up. There was no cheering, but prolonged applause. Cheering would have been as bad taste as laughing in church. Mr. Baldwin sat down and took a glass of water from the table. He gazed at the crowd and suddenly became conscious of the cuckoo in the nest. He covered his eyes with his hand like a sailor, and gazed to make sure that it was one of his followers from the House of Commons. Being satisfied that it was, he raised his glass and drank a sip of water.

Then did the real business begin. This was the annual meeting of the association, and that was an important occasion. There was the honorary treasurer's report to be read, and we learned that, although the association started last year with a deficit of £20, it had ended with a surplus of £4.

Well done, sir! We all applauded. So did the Prime Minister. Oh, very well done, sir! But did the treasurer take the credit? Not him. The surplus was due to the indefatigable efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Somebody, who had worked through rain, snow, fog and blizzard to make the annual whist drive the best yet. (Loud applause.) The hon. treasurer's voice was giving out a bit, so a steward placed a loud speaker in front of him.

Then the association elected officers for the coming year, and the microphone was passed from one to the other like a priest bestowing a benediction. There was an admiral on the platform who was about eighty and as lively as a cricket. He was thanked. So was the chairman, who had been chairman when Stanley Baldwin was adopted as candidate twenty-nine years before. For nearly an hour the business went on, and the Prime Minister sat there like any M.P., waiting until the business caught up to him.

Suddenly the audience grew tense. As per long custom, the moment had arrived when a vote of confidence in the Member was to be moved. It was a man who did so, and he expressed his fear that Mr. Baldwin would on this occasion confirm the bad news in the papers about his impending retirement. The seconder was a Mrs. Lea, a young woman who spoke beautifully.

"Mr. Baldwin is more than our Member," she said. "He embodies those qualities which in Worcestershire we hold most dear—honesty, dignity, sincerity."

Slowly, Mr. Baldwin rose to his feet. So did we. There was a little embarrassed applause, but so deep was the feeling that the crowd felt that it was better expressed just in the standing. So, in the ancient Guildhall, we stood with the Prime Minister while not a word was spoken.

Then we sat down, and Squire Baldwin began to talk to us. He was dressed in ordinary day clothes, and his trousers were professorial in their indifference to the presser's art. There was no attempt to put the microphone near him. That rich, unforced voice can fill any place, even though he seldom speaks above an ordinary conversational tone.

At first he seemed a little shy, almost brusque, but I, who had watched him in a dozen critical scenes in Parliament, could tell that he was labouring under a heavy emotion. His manner, not his words, expressed



his real thoughts. It was as if he were saying: "Now this is a very dangerous moment for you and me. If we are not careful I might say something that would bring the emotion to the surface, which would not be worthy of those of us who come from the soil of Worcestershire. I know what is in your hearts and you know what is in mine, so let us help each other to keep it there."

So in a calm, unfaltering voice he told how, twenty-nine years ago, he drove to the town of Worcester behind two horses, to be adopted as Conservative candidate to take the place of his father. "To-day," he said, "I drove here in a car." Then, as if to keep it from being too personal, he argued that acceleration was not always the same as progress.

Later on he said: "I am sufficiently an old-fashioned Tory to wish that I had one of my own name to succeed me. I hate to see the name of Baldwin disappearing from Worcester." Again he moved on quickly, as if we might recall that his eldest son, Oliver, has been in the opposite political camp for fifteen years.

Then he spoke of the strain of office, how he had laughed at former Premiers who had said the burden was almost insupportable. "I know now," he said, "that they spoke the truth. A man should only remain in office as long as he can give his best. When he begins to feel that he can give less than his best—even if his friends do not realise it—he should make way for some one else. My judgment is not impaired, nor do I think my intellectual force is less than what it was, but I cannot throw off the weariness which has come to me with the long strain." That was the manner of his historic announcement.

"I have been praised beyond my deserts," he said, "and criticized beyond them, too. All I can say is that I gave the best I had."

Again, to break the tension, he moved quickly to a study of dictators in Europe, and pictured the future of

European civilisation. But he could not put off the end forever. There was a little pause and his voice became so quiet that people strained to hear.

"I do not think to-day that there is anything more I want to say to you. I would like my last words to be words of gratitude and words of thanks. I thank you for coming in such numbers to see me this afternoon, and I would merely say in conclusion, God bless you every one."

He sat down and took another sip of water. The applause went on and on, while the eyes of many were shining strangely. Outside, the streets were packed with people waiting to cheer, but there was no cheering in the hall. Feeling was too deep for that.

With half an hour to spare, my wife and I walked to the station. As we emerged on to the long platform we saw the Premier and Mrs. Baldwin talking with their host, who had come to see them off. Just before the train arrived, Mr. Baldwin spotted us and came up to shake hands.

"What in the world brought you to Worcester?" he asked. "I was never more surprised in my life than when I saw you there."

I tried to explain that Mr. Stanley Baldwin announcing his retirement to his own constituency was something of human and historic importance. He seemed puzzled at the thought. Obviously he could not make out why a Member of Parliament would travel from London just for that reason. And since I was the only Member of the House of Commons to do so, perhaps there was something strange about it, although I fail to see why. Certainly I would have travelled a long distance to have seen Gladstone or Disraeli announce their impending retirement to their constituents.

At any rate that is the story, and I am sorry if it has bored you.

## *Hollywood Over Europe*

AT THIS MOMENT the European situation is dreadfully and violently obscure. Every day Mr. Eden stands up in the House of Commons and declares, "His Majesty's Government profoundly regrets that Signor—or Herr—has seen fit to take such and such a course of action."

Regrets . . . regrets . . . regrets.

Let us turn our binoculars on the Continent of Europe and try to solve the puzzle.

Supposing that you or I went to Hollywood and told Sol. P. Hogwasch or any other million-dollar-a-year producer that we had a plot for a scenario called "Europe Steps out," or "Swing Time in Europe," or any other of the silly names given to films. And further supposing that Mr. Hogwasch deigned to inquire what the story was about, we would start something like this:

"The film opens with German aeroplanes bombing defenceless Spanish towns and killing women and babies. Then you cut to a German cruiser in Spanish waters. A Spanish Government aeroplane drops a bomb on the German cruiser and kills a lot of sailors. That makes the German dictator furious. He says it is an outrage."

"I don't get you," says Sol. "If the German planes shoot the Spanish women and babies, why shouldn't the Spanish planes bomb the German warship?"

With gentleness and patience we explain to Mr. Hogwasch that Germany and Spain are not at war officially, and therefore it is quite understandable that a place is a combatant but a warship is neutral.

"It sounds crazy to me," remarks the film magnate. "But what does the Big Shot in Berlin do about it?"

"He orders a bombardment of the unprotected Spanish coast and kills a lot more women and children."

Sol raises a protesting hand. "Then the battleship isn't neutral any more?"

We explain again that the battleship is merely punishing the Spanish Government for a breach of etiquette, and that after the firing it becomes neutral again.

"You're screwy," says Sol with his well-known charm of manner. "The customers would give it the laugh."

We urge him to be patient, that one of the big moments of the film is about to come.

"You cut to Moscow," we resume. "The Russian dictator has just shot all the senior generals in his army."

Sol scratches his head. "How do you get them Russian guys into this picture?"

"That is simple. Russia has been supporting the Spanish Government cause, and Germany has been supporting the Spanish insurgent cause."

"But I thought you said them Germans was nootral!"

"So are the Russians."

Mr. Hogwasch surveys us with that penetrating eye which has cowed a thousand people at a time. "Listen, sonny," he says sadly. "With fifty million movie directors looking for a script, why pick on me?"

We urge him to be patient. We assure him that the picture will be a triumphant success, that it has had thousands of millions of dollars worth of advance publicity.

"Okay, baby," says Sol, with a gesture of resignation. "So they shoot the Russian generals. That might go big with the guys who were at the last war."

Conscious of his growing interest, we continue our exposition.

"Now, just as you see the Russian generals fall dead the camera changes to an excited scene in the Bourse;

that is, the Paris Stock Exchange. A lot of Frenchmen with beards are selling francs by the million to other Frenchmen with beards. Then the clock strikes. Slowly the doors of the Bourse close. France is bankrupt."

"We could have some soft music there," murmurs Mr. Hogwasch. "But, say, what have the French got to do with this picture?"

We explain that France is a neutral, supporting the Spanish Government. We also explain that owing to the French Government giving fewer hours of work, more pay and less taxes, the Treasury has gone bust.

Mr. Hogwasch stops us with a mesmeric hand.

"The customers won't take it," he says. "The customers in the Middle West will swallow most anything you give them, but there's a limit."

"But I haven't told you about England and Italy yet."

"No, sir," remarks Mr. Hogwasch, "and you ain't going to. But I tell you what to do, sonny. Take your story to the Marx Brothers. They're looking for something so crazy that even people with a sense of humour will laugh."

The more this European situation goes on, the more I find myself developing an intellectual affinity with Mr. Hogwasch. And in some mysterious way, the dark continent seems to be drawing closer to us as events leap skyward like sparks in conflagration.

A few months ago Spain seemed tragic but fairly remote. There is hardly a day now in which one does not make some intimate contact with that savage struggle. A friend of mine wrote to me two months ago to see if I could get a young man and his wife out of Bilbao. The young man was heir to a rich Spanish father, and had been educated at Cambridge. I took it up with the Foreign Office, and Lord Cranbourne, the Under Secretary, told me that he hoped to get them out, possibly in exchange for two other hostages in Franco's territory.

Then Bilbao fell. Yesterday, I learned that almost the last act of the retreating garrison was to shoot these two innocent people and to leave their bodies sprawling on their doorstep. Perhaps our attempts at interference may have sealed their doom.

I met the former president of the Bank of Spain the other day. He hid for three months in Madrid and then got away. "They shot my secretary and my butler," he said wearily, "because they did not know where I was."

A little later I met a young Spaniard at luncheon and he denounced the Government of Madrid with the utmost violence. "Excuse me," he said, "I speak too passionately. But eight members of my family have been murdered, and it is not easy to be calm."

I see no end to the Spanish war for a long time. These tenacious, cruel and brave people are like two animals in the jungle, knowing that defeat means death. But can the flames go on for another year with none of the sparks reaching the powder magazine of Greater Europe?

Once more, for an answer to our question, we must turn to Adolf Hitler, the Austrian sign painter, who wields a greater and more despotic power than Bismarck or Frederick the Great.

Let me admit at once that those of us who criticise Herr Hitler's administration are prone to judge the temperaments and conditions of other countries by our own. The political development of Great Britain has gone on for centuries. The political development of the German people is a matter of a few short years. The German Empire was conceived by force, welded together by force, broken by force. The political consciousness of the German people has never been given a chance to mature. Intelligent and gifted as they are—in many directions more gifted than any other race—the Germans are but children in political understanding.

Therefore, like children or primitive tribesmen, they

turn to the superman, a human god, who will lead them by the hand through the dark forest. Their lack of faith in themselves as individuals is only one degree more pathetic than their over-confidence in themselves as a racial unit which is being led by an inspired superman.

It would be a mistake to belittle the achievements of Herr Hitler. He has taken his people by the hand as if they were children, but in their other hand he has put a rifle.

Hitler's enemies are never still. They circulate in every department of life in London. One enters into conversation at a reception or dinner. Suddenly you find some distinguished foreigner saying to you: "Russia is not Germany's enemy. You will see that at his own moment Hitler will make an alliance with Russia. That is why those Russian generals were shot—because they were preparing the way to the *rapprochement* with Hitler. It is you in Britain who are the only enemy. Hitler intends to make war on you very soon."

What can one reply to such statements? What can one do but ring these islands with a hedge of aeroplanes? Yet, in spite of this incessant poisoning of the wells, there is a firm and growing belief that Germany neither desires nor intends war. Maybe the wish is father to the thought.

Nothing is more true than the statement that personalities control events. The present German ambassador to London is Herr von Ribbentrop, who spent some time in Canada before the War selling champagne to a country which at that time had practically no interest in champagne. Attractive as he is, physically and intellectually, he has not been a success. Rightly or wrongly, we believe that he is hostile to Britain. What is more, we feel that there is a feud between von Ribbentrop and Germany's Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath.

A little while ago we were delighted to learn that Baron von Neurath was to visit Mr. Eden. Both in the German and the British press there appeared real expres-

sions of mutual good will. I have never known pro-German feeling so strong as during that short period. And then what happened?

The captain of the German cruiser, *Leipzig*, reported that he had seen, or thought he had seen, Spanish torpedoes being launched at his ship. Hitler went mad with fury. Von Ribbentrop was called to Berlin, and von Neurath's visit to London was cancelled without so much as an apology. For a few anxious hours it seemed that Germany and Italy were going to take command of the Mediterranean. Mr. Eden let it be known that he would regard such a move as an unfriendly act. From the blue skies of Anglo-German good will, had come this thunderstorm. Those of us who are the elected legislators of the people crowded the House of Commons and watched anxiously for news. Mr. Eden rose to make a statement. His manner was calm and his voice steady.

"I have received word from His Majesty's ambassador in Berlin that the German Government have decided to withdraw their ships from Spanish waters in order not to aggravate the present tension, and the German Government will take no further action in regard to the attack on the *Leipzig*."

It was the biggest triumph of Mr. Eden's career. When he had sent word that he would regard open action on the part of Italy and Germany in the Mediterranean as an unfriendly act, he staked more than his own political fate. Germany listened to this new voice, to this voice of a resolute and armed Britain.

It would be neither wise nor perhaps fair to say that Germany was frightened into withdrawal. Let us rather put it that she recognised that she would lose all chance of a new understanding with this strong and dominating power called Great Britain.

I realise that, even as I write these words, they may be rendered futile before they are read. But the British



House of Commons is a curious place. There is a psychic quality about it that frequently reveals the spirit behind the words. I felt on the day of Eden's announcement that we were hearing a message from a different Hitler. Hitherto in every crisis he has disdained world opinion. Now, instead of blustering, threatening and inspiring the frenzy of his people, he was acting like a statesman.

Has he learned at last that there are no frontiers to responsibility? Does he recognise that because he is the leader of seventy million Germans, he owes a higher duty to Western Civilisation?

That was some days ago. Nothing that has happened since has shaken my confidence in this new conception of the German dictator. If, by the time you read this, he has again shattered our illusions, we must try to regain them. Adolf Hitler is brutal, but he is not vicious. Perhaps if we believe he is a statesman, he will become one.

France will survive her internal crisis. The nation which, under Napoleon, conquered Europe, cannot be beaten by a mad, inconsequential Socialism, or the unprincipled activities of the speculator. This financial crisis will restore discipline to her. In so many ways she is still the most civilised nation in the world, and if the issue is joined, French democracy will not fail us.

Then what is the answer? I repeat what I said in Toronto in 1935, and what I wrote six months later—that there is not going to be a great European war. The war of 1914 was criminal, but at least the nations that fought had something to lose. A European war now would be like the ploughing of a battlefield. You could gain a bigger harvest by sowing seeds in a desert.

Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini know that if the British Fleet were ordered into action to-morrow and the British Air Force sent into the skies, Britain's enemies would take such punishment as history has never before recorded. They also know that this strength will not be

used until outraged justice and a violated civilisation can no longer endure the onslaught of events.

Therefore it comes back to the same equation. Can Great Britain, with her idealism and her power, hold off the storm until the clouds divide and the sun shines once more upon the dark fields of Europe?

I believe she can.

## *Britain's Dictator Departs*

THIS IS the first Sunday of the post-Baldwin era. Mark the date well, for it may be the beginning of strange things.

The squire has turned the key in the lock and has gone never to return. The historian has closed his book and the story is ended.

The solemn pageantry of farewell is over. For the last time (those pungent words come to every man in his time) Mr. Baldwin presided over his Cabinet. For the last time he sat in his place in the Commons. For the last time he went to Buckingham Palace as Prime Minister.

We shall never again see him enter the House of Commons with that lurching, countryman's stride as if he was just completing a five-mile tramp along a winding leafy lane. In his own language, he is passing into the shades—which means that he is going to the House of Lords, that distant land from whose bourne no traveller returns.

And the curious thing is that we are seeing for the first time in history the voluntary retiring of a dictator.

When my son is old enough to take an interest in such things I shall tell him the strange story of Stanley Baldwin. My son will be incredulous. And he will be quite right. The Baldwin legend strains credulity to breaking point.

It was Wilde, I think, who said that the first duty of a gentleman was to be improbable. Mr. Baldwin has faithfully performed that duty. His career has been the very essence of improbability.

He never aspired to the Premiership. He never wanted it. He never made a single move to achieve it. He fumbled it when he got it. Given another chance he

fumbled it again. He was always being swept in or swept out by the tides. He destroyed his enemies without striking a blow against them.

And he finally emerged to such a position of influence that he literally achieved a dictatorship by which he changed the King and could almost have dissolved Parliament.

Truly a personality and a character that will puzzle the future historian.

"What did he do?" will be asked. "Did he add a continent to the Empire, or make a treaty that ensured Britain's safety, or establish a League of Nations that was indestructible, or bring about disarmament? Did he introduce reforms that lifted the chains from future generations? Did he purchase shares in another Suez Canal? Did he settle the trouble between Ireland and Britain?"

The future historian will shake his head and say: "I cannot find that he did any of these things, but he was a great Prime Minister, perhaps the greatest since Pitt."

Can't you see schoolboys in 1987 wrinkling their foreheads as they try to write an examination paper on "Explain the hold of Stanley Baldwin on the imagination and destiny of the British people?"

To appraise the career of Mr. Baldwin one must study his character, which alone holds the secret of his staggering success. It was never what *he did* that mattered, it was always what *he was*. The impact of events never altered him in the least. In the end it was he who altered events.

In the essence of the man Mr. Baldwin was primarily a poet and a countryman. It was only by the pressure of Fate that he became a politician.

He had a poet's aloofness from reality, a poet's sense of beauty, a poet's love of words that made music out of thought. He had a countryman's contempt for

artifice, a countryman's endurance and a countryman's sagacity, which knew the danger of a misty moon and sensed the coming storm in the flying of the birds.

His enemies were always feeling aggrieved at Mr. Baldwin's astuteness. They felt that an honest man should be stupid. Mr. Baldwin did not agree. He could not see what good it did any one to get caught in a rainstorm.

"But we thought we were dealing with a poet," they said.

"You forget that I am also something of a peasant," Mr. Baldwin could have replied.

I stress this theme of poetry because I believe that more than anything else it explains the Baldwin mystery. Again and again you find the guiding *motif* of his actions springing from the idealism, the detachment and the romanticism of the poet.

His impulsive handing over of a third of his fortune to the nation in the war was more the action of a Shelley than an Ellerman. He thought that others would follow suit, for a poet always believes that idealism is catching. He was wrong.

His settlement of the American Debt was the action of an idealist who felt that honour was everything. He was wrong.

He plunged his Government into defeat in 1923 because he thought industry needed protection and that the people would not be misled by platform oratory. He was wrong.

He bought off the coal strike believing that he could prevent thereby a general strike. He was wrong.

During his second term as Prime Minister he did not introduce Protection because he thought the people would not accept it. I think he was wrong.

These were the charges made by his enemies and on which they derided him as a second-rater, a fumbler and a bungler. Nor were these denunciations made

only outside. In his own party many M.P.s believed and said that he would eventually lead them to disaster.

What they did not see was the amazing consistency of the man himself. He was bringing to every problem a basic decency, a basic common sense and a basic trust in the other man. The American Debt settlement was a blunder, but the prestige of Britain's honour rose so high that even the eventual renunciation of the payments could not lower it.

Were his blunders real blunders? Is it not more true that they were victories of character over the temptations of political improvisation? He took upon his head such a storm of abuse as no public man had ever had to endure before, but he left no legacies of adroitness, no successes of cunning to turn into ashes for his successors.

From the ruins of his failures a finer, cleaner edifice was arising. More and more it began to be evident that this was a man of destiny guided by a power beyond the understanding of men.

The arrows of ridicule were still launched against him, but in the camps of the enemy they were saying: "He is protected by some secret fire that we cannot penetrate."

Yet it was not until the abdication crisis that the real power of Stanley Baldwin was revealed. There had come to him a situation, at once grave and unpredictable, which he was supremely fitted to meet.

For this was a crisis in which character was the dominating factor—and in the realm of character Mr. Baldwin is a giant.

What would almost any other Prime Minister have done in the circumstances? He would have played for time, for the safety factor.

He would have persuaded the King privately of the wisdom of Mrs. Simpson going abroad until the Coronation, so as to let "the talk simmer down." He would

have used his skill as a diplomat to buy off the crisis, trusting that something would turn up to make it all right.

Mr. Baldwin did not shirk the issue. He met it with firmness, gentleness and dignity.

There are those who believe that he placed the King in an impossible position, and that he used the crisis to get rid of a troublesome monarch. Nothing could be more false.

I can reveal now that there was a section of the Cabinet in favour of an ultimatum to the King demanding that he should choose between the Throne and the woman. Mr. Baldwin would have none of it.

Again and again he said to the King: "It is for you, Sir, to decide, not us. You alone must search your heart for the answer. I have told you about the feeling in the Dominions and what I believe would be the feeling here when it became generally known. That is my duty. But the decision must be yours."

Thus did he preserve the dignity of the monarchy in that most critical hour, and thus did he re-establish in the life of the nation a sense of moral values and individual responsibility which will influence events for generations ahead.

That was Stanley Baldwin at his best. In that crisis he had reached his full stature. He was still the poet, still the countryman, but he had become a great Minister of State who saw the future with clear eyes and made each move with the sureness of a master.

Now he has gone. The beloved dictator has departed, not in defeat, but at the very height of his powers and the triumph of his career.

He will be as unchanged by loss of office as he was by its acquisition. But he will be happier. Now he can go back to his books which were his companions in his lonely youth. He will be able to walk again the lanes of the countryside and enjoy the kindness of life's sunset.

Events will draw him to the centre of things from time to time, but they will not hold him. He will not chafe for the golden chains of slavery.

The greatest Englishman of our time will ask nothing more than to live the remainder of his years as a citizen of the country which he loves so deeply and which he served so well.



## *We Talk of Jews*

IF ANY of you had happened to look in on the British Parliament one midnight a few weeks ago, you would have seen a strange and puzzling sight.

The House was crowded and was tense with excitement. Mr. Lloyd George, from the Opposition Benches, was exchanging glances and notes with Mr. Churchill on the Government side. Mr. Chamberlain, as Prime Minister, sat on the Front Bench and stared straight ahead, giving quick, quiet commands to his puzzled Ministers, his face, as usual, revealing nothing that was in his mind. The lanky Earl Winterton was winding up the Debate for the Government. He was floundering badly and the more he floundered the more he tried to convince the House that he was sure of himself. The Socialists had emerged from their usual bemusement and were obviously forcing a dramatic situation upon the Government. Even the newspaper correspondents, in their gallery, leaned forward, forgetting for once that they were mere observers of the scene and feeling as if they were participants.

And what was the crisis:

Had Hitler delivered an ultimatum? Had Mussolini mobilized his fleet in the Mediterranean?

It was neither of these. The subject which had brought this crisis upon Parliament was the world problem of the Jew.

The future historian, studying the actions of the men who led or misled destiny at this period, may well wonder that the British House of Commons, with all its pressing difficulties, could find time to debate the ageless question of the Jew.

To understand the situation which had so suddenly

blown up in Parliament I must ask you to go back to a scene not long before the War. Jerusalem, the city of unforgettable memories, was en fête. The German Kaiser was about to enter. A marvellous triumphant arch had been erected by the order of his Government and through this he rode on his horse, the personification of the superman and warlord of Europe dreaming with open eyes of the creation of a new Eastern German Empire.

The mist of time float on. It is November, 1917. The forces of Allenby are besieging Jerusalem, tenaciously defended by the Turks. As far as possible everything is being done by the attacking army to save the Holy places, but within those limits the siege is relentless and efficient. Suddenly from London a message by Lord Balfour is sent round the world and the news reaches the City of Jerusalem.

"If Palestine falls to British arms a national home for the Jews shall be set up there."

A few days later the Turks surrender Jerusalem. The people of the city go into the streets murmuring and questioning. Lord Allenby, that great cavalry commander, rides to the gates; then, dismounting, he humbly enters on foot as one who treads on sacred soil.

The Turks have gone. The threat of an Eastern German Empire is broken, but Britain had pledged her word, and one of the greatest experiments in history has begun—the return of a westernised people to the place of their origin in the East.

Those were the first moves in the drama which culminated the other night in the British House of Commons. What happened to the great experiment?

In due course it took form. Jewry, to whom we had given our pledge, was set the task of emigrating to Palestine and working out an existence alongside the Arabs. This was the first difficulty. Britain had given

pledges to the Arabs as well as to the Jews. In actual fact there was no clash in those pledges. But the Arab, tenacious of his rights and in possession of the soil, feared that he was going to be robbed of his birthright in Palestine. The Jew, on the other hand, true to the characteristics of his race, saw no limitations in what Britain had promised to him and thought that he was going to rule over Palestine with the Arabs as a secondary, if not actually a subject race. Therefore the Arabs looked sullenly on while the scattered tribes of Israel began to arrive. German-speaking, Russian-speaking and Hebrew-speaking Jews brought their failings, their genius, their high hopes and their broken hearts to create a new garden in the desert.

The world had almost forgotten the many-sidedness of the Jew. It knew him as a financier, a scientist, a pugilist, an artist, an exploiter of entertainment. It did not realise that basically he is a capable agriculturalist. Soon, therefore, a transformation began to come over the face of Palestine. The wisdom of the West had been brought to the backwardness of the East. The vision of a happy and prosperous Jewish home swept through the world and inflamed the imaginations of Jews of all classes. Zionism became again a passionate expression of a tragic race and Jews in every part of the world, who on no account would ever dream of going to Palestine, began to think and talk of it as their home.

In 1922, however, came the first shock. Transjordan, more than half the territory of Palestine, was detached from the experiment and given over to Abdullah, the son of Hussein, as a separate emirate. The beards of the Israelites bristled with indignation. But eventually they unbristled and their owners got on with their task. So began a period of development which might have gone peacefully on with the process of normal emigration if a deeper shadow than ever had not fallen upon the Jewish race.

A man named Hitler sat in the seat of Bismarck and his finger was pointed at the Jews.

I do not deny that the Jewish race, which has defects of character as well as great gifts peculiar to itself, had created resentment in certain places. A wandering race of people which maintains its identity through the centuries and has never really merged with the people among whom it lives, must always create difficult and almost insoluble human problems. I cannot help but admire the tenacity of a race which maintains its character under such conditions. At the same time that very quality of survival is the basis of the hatred which springs up periodically through the centuries. Yet in my opinion nothing that can be said against the Jewish race can ever justify for one moment the savage brutality of the German persecution which has found its echo in Rumania and other European countries.

With this outbreak of anti-Semitism the Palestine experiment took on an entirely new character. Instead of normal emigration, Palestine was faced with tens of thousands of Jewish refugees despoiled and robbed of their means of livelihood, who wanted to go back to the promised land as their one hope of happiness. Unfortunately there are no frontiers to evil. The smouldering hatred of the Arabs was fanned into flame by the hot winds of anti-Semitism which reached them from Europe. The crack of the assassin's pistol was heard and terror was spread in the streets of the Holy City. Jews who had fled the persecution of Europe were shot dead in the land of their fathers.

Once more British troops took on their time-honoured task of keeping order. It was a work of almost unbelievable difficulty. If it was difficult for the Black and Tans in Ireland to distinguish one O'Brien from another, imagine trying to track down an Arab assassin in the hills and the sands of Palestine.

The situation grew so grave that at last the British

Government took the only step they could. They appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole future of Palestine. This Commission was made up of impartial and experienced men who went over the entire territory and studied it from every angle, taking into account not only the pledges of the past, the existing agricultural and industrial developments, but the human equation of Arab and Jewish feuds as well. After much deliberation they drew up their report and advised the British Government that that portion of Palestine which had survived the partition of 1922 should be divided in three sections:

1. A Jewish State.
2. An Arab State.
3. A Corridor State taking in Jerusalem and controlled by Britain as the Mandatory Power.

In other words, Britain had fallen back upon the judgment of Solomon.

And those were the events which led up to the debate in the House of Commons when Mr. Ormsby-Gore, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, made a long and impassioned speech asking the House to approve of its policy of partition.

All day long the Parliamentary battle raged. A Socialist ex-minister named Morgan Jones brought a tempestuous Welsh eloquence to the support of the Jews. Mr. Lloyd George, with his incredible youth, stood up and dared the Government to go ahead with its plan. James de Rothschild, with his silk hat, huge wing collar and his monocle, spoke with his deep voice and pleaded the cause of his race. The question of the Jew as an individual had not arisen, but again and again the point was made that Great Britain had befriended this race, had given it back its forgotten dreams and that this culmination was neither just nor wise. There were one or two voices raised on behalf of the Arabs, but the House refused to be drawn into that controversy.

It was one of the greatest debates I have ever heard.

A splendid dignity animated the famous Chamber, where the destinies of humanity have so often been decided. In vain did the Government listen for some voice of their own supporters which would turn the tide. That voice never came. Whisperings began to take place along the Front Bench and Winston Churchill went out for consultation with the Chief Whip. It was nearing midnight when Churchill came back. What would he do? Baldwin had refused to give him office. Chamberlain had kept up the ban when he formed his Cabinet. Would Churchill save the Government now, or would he join forces with Lloyd George and inflict humiliation upon Mr. Chamberlain's administration?

Winston Churchill has many defects. He is impulsive, at times unstable, and his judgment is at the mercy of his enthusiasms, but he has a sense of statesmanship in a crisis and a magnanimity toward his enemies which places him at the very top of public men. May I in a sentence explain the Government's dilemma? On the Order Paper was a resolution asking for Parliament's support for partition. Similarly on the Order Paper was an amendment from the Socialist Party, asking the House to reject partition. To avoid a defeat the Government would have had to put on the Whips, forcing its supporters into the Lobby, against their better judgment. That would have been the path of disaster, because when a great issue has arisen the Members of the House of Commons refuse to be treated as sheep.

At last Churchill stood up. His proposal was that a vote should not be taken. He did not think that on a question of this kind we should have a division in the House. It might mislead world opinion, which would not understand a manœuvre of Party Government. Therefore, he suggested that the Government should accept a verbal amendment to the effect that the Report of the Commission should be taken by the British Government to the League of Nations for discussion, but

that it should be clearly understood that Parliament had not given its approval. Lloyd George suggested a slight alteration or two and so the crisis passed. The Socialists, with a sense of responsibility which is wholly admirable, gave up the tactical advantage which they had gained and allowed the Government to escape from its dilemma. So the problem has been transferred to Geneva. Eventually it will come back to us and we will again debate it.

Whatever the result of that debate may be, I am not likely to forget for a long time that extraordinary day in the House of Commons.

I realise, of course, that loyalty and consideration are not enough to solve the Jewish problem. Whether Palestine is divided into three parts or whether the present experiment is carried on, it cannot be the answer to the world problem of Jewry. Anti-Semitism is not dying in Europe. It is on the increase. The problem of the Jewish exile is going to grow more acute, not less. In Palestine, the Jew has proved that he can develop the soil and create a flourishing civilisation. Are there no other lands where he could be given a chance to do the same thing.

I do not sentimentalise over the Jew as a Jew. I have Jewish friends whose culture and whose honour and generosity are beyond praise and I know Jews who are cheats and liars and whose influence upon the community is entirely bad.

But you cannot indict a race. What I have said of the Jews could be said of any other race. The Christian world must face the problem of Jewry. Palestine is important for its symbolism, and because it has proved the capacity of the Jew for pioneer development, but we must look farther for a solution.

## *Mr. Chamberlain Writes a Letter*

THE OTHER day Mr. Neville Chamberlain sat down at his desk at Downing Street and wrote a letter. Unlike most men of high position, he prefers to write a note in his own hand if he can possibly get the time. Perhaps from a rather Old World courtesy, he knows that it is more personal, more intimate, and therefore more likely to be appreciated.

This letter, however, was of some length, and the Prime Minister gave considerable thought to it. When it was finished he asked Anthony Eden to come to see him.

"I have written this letter to Mussolini," he said. "You might read it."

That, in abbreviated form, is one of the most dramatic incidents that has happened in the post-War era of European politics. Its immediate reaction was immensely important. Its repercussions in the future may go far beyond the dreams even of Mr. Chamberlain himself.

Let me reconstruct for a moment the situation preceding the writing of that letter. For some time all Italian journalists had been recalled from London. With the exception of the representatives of two pro-Italian newspapers, no British reporters were allowed in Italy, nor any British newspapers admitted. In a frenzied speech Mussolini had denounced "the hyenas of the British press who have drunk the blood of Italy's youth as if it were whisky."

In the House of Commons, the Socialists and Liberals lost no opportunity of insulting the Italian dictator. The Liberal *News-Chronicle*, which has a historic passion for pacifism, said that when it contemplated the spectacle of Mussolini and Hitler it felt positively Palmerstonian—in



other words, ready to march against them at an hour's notice. The Mediterranean had become a sea of intrigue where British and Italian ships prowled by each other wondering when a clash would occur.

I am not overstating the case. The strained relations of Italy and Great Britain, had they existed before the Great War, could only have led to an outbreak of hostilities.

Suddenly, as I have said, Neville Chamberlain sat down and wrote a letter. It was a human letter from a man occupying a position of great responsibility to another man of the same kind. He cut through all the red tape of diplomatic usage and came right to the point. What was the trouble between Italy and Great Britain? What had happened to a friendship that had existed for so many years? In what way had Italy mistrusted our intentions? Why did she think that Anglo-Italian friendship could not be restored?

It was not the letter of a weak man, afraid of a threat. On the contrary, it was a message from a man so strong that he could afford to be generous without being misunderstood.

The letter was dispatched, and within a very few hours the reply was flown back from Rome. It, too, was in the personal handwriting of the sender, Benito Mussolini. Following upon its arrival, the Italian Ambassador, Count Grandi, called upon Mr. Chamberlain. It was the longest interview that Mr. Chamberlain has granted since he became Prime Minister. It is not too much to say that when that conversation was finished, a bridge had been thrown across the dangerous waters of Anglo-Italian misunderstanding.

Readers, I am sure, will realise that I am writing this close upon the event. I know that there are thousands of Italian troops still in Spain and that Britain is trying to persuade Italy to withdraw them; I know that there is the conquest of Abyssinia which has not been

acknowledged by Great Britain; I know there is still the fierce enmity of the democratic countries against the dictatorship countries. Therefore, I must back my own judgment and take the chance of being proved wrong when I claim that the creation of this bridge is of such vast importance that it may alter the whole trend of European politics.

There will be attempts made to wreck that bridge. There will be shouts that any bridge that leads to Europe can only take us to disaster. Yet the fact remains that, for the first time in many anxious months of covert threats and vulgar brawling, the Italian and British people are seeing each other with clear and unjaundiced vision.

*"There are no dead,"* said Maeterlinck in the triumphal climax of one of his plays.

*"There is no hatred,"* we might cry at this moment, *"but only misunderstanding."*

Did Mr. Chamberlain foresee the consequence of this impulsive act of what the Americans would call "shirt-sleeve diplomacy"? There is more than a touch of Abraham Lincoln about it, with its contempt of ceremony and its stark humanity. What made him do it?

Perhaps it was because we were on the verge of the anniversary of the outbreak of War in 1914, the time when older men's thoughts turn irresistibly toward the dead who gave their immortality that war should perish from the earth. It may be the combination of many things. Men of destiny are influenced by unseen forces which they themselves do not understand.

At any rate, the bridge was there. That was the one unchallengeable fact. The question was: will Mr. Chamberlain be content with it, or will he have the courage to accept the full implications of his act.

In other words, would he take the gamble for peace?

The story of the three Chamberlains is taking on an epic character. Joseph Chamberlain fought with a

relentless violence to unite the people of the Empire in spiritual and fiscal union that would endure the impact of centuries.

Austen Chamberlain put his signature to the Locarno Pact, Britain's first pledge to guarantee both sides of a frontier.

Now the third Chamberlain, the younger brother who was not considered to possess Westminster calibre, stands before the world as the one man who can bring about peace to Europe. It is a staggering record of actual and potential accomplishment for one family. If the Prime Minister can crown the accomplishment of his father and his brother, then the name of Chamberlain will reign unchallenged for many decades. The only question is whether he will have the courage and the vision to go through with it. The path of Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* was not more beset with difficulties.

What are those difficulties?

First, he will have to meet the denunciation of the Isolationists, who will evoke the shade of the great Joseph and accuse the son of selling the Kingdom of Empire for a mess of European pottage. They will urge him to withdraw into the Empire and leave Europe to its own fate.

That policy might have been possible once. Now you might just as well advise a man to lock his door to keep out the encroaching flames or to put up a sign in his garden: "No rain wanted here."

The development of the Empire is of profound importance. The campaign of the Beaverbrook Isolationists is splendid as long as it is directed toward that end, but to imagine that Britain can withdraw from Europe, which is a few minutes away, and hide in her Empire across the seas, is worthy of Sam Goldwyn's famous declaration to his partners: "Boys, include me out!"

There is a bigger problem over here, though, than the Isolationists. It is the large body of confused but

well-meaning people who believe fanatically in the mystic power of the League of Nations and regard Fascism as an anti-Christ manifestation which must be fought by all decent people. These enthusiasts will rage with fury if Mr. Chamberlain tries to build a structure of peace with Germany and Italy under their present forms of government.

"Look at us!" they cry. "We are a democracy. Why can't Germany and Italy be democracies?"

Will Mr. Chamberlain have the courage to say that another nation's form of government is no concern of ours? Will he explain that which needs explaining—that the people of Britain have had centuries of freedom from invasion, secure behind their ocean wall, to develop a democratic government, while Europe with its interlocked states has been forced to accept autocratic government for self-preservation?

I, myself, hate Fascism with all the hatred of a man whose ancestors are steeped in the tradition of liberty, but I am all for the closest and most cordial understanding with Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Communist Russia, individualistic America and Imperialistic Japan, as long as they will not try to interfere with our democratic way of governing ourselves.

This is a strange man, this Neville Chamberlain. He has a cold exterior, but a flame burns fiercely inside his breast. I wonder what he is going to do. Will he hold out the hand of friendship to the dictators, and if so, what will be the terms of the bond? That is not an easy question to answer. All I can do is to imagine myself in the position of Mr. Chamberlain with the map of the world spread before me.

Across the Atlantic lies the United States, that brilliant nation of courageous experiment and marvellous improvisation. We shall never be allies bound by a contract, but we shall never be enemies. The common bond of language and traditions will keep us near together

in sympathy, but we cannot have a friendship which has one vital reservation about it. Britain must arrange to pay the American War Debt. The terms must be revised, but the Debt cannot be denied. It is neither wise nor dignified to allow American citizens to point to us as a defaulting nation.

I know that this is a subject on which many Canadians feel very deeply. There is a large body of opinion in Canada which believes that we do not owe anything to America. I cannot take that view. The American Debt Settlement made in 1922 with Mr. Baldwin was monstrous. There was nothing that could possibly justify the terms imposed by the United States. That settlement was doomed to fail. Not only was the rate of interest impossible and the full amount utterly out of accord with the basic nature of the transaction, but the terms were so much more harsh than they were to any other of America's debtors who followed our lead.

We were the first nation to make any attempt to honour our bond. It seemed as if the United States was determined to penalise us for that very action. There is a moral case that America should cancel the debt. As she does not choose to do so, however, we have no justification for not paying it.

The most important thing in the world to-day is the growing friendship and understanding of the English-speaking peoples. We cannot afford to have the uninformed American denouncing us as defaulters. Therefore, I think Mr. Chamberlain, in spite of the heavy load which Britain is carrying and in spite of the burdens of civilisation which are resting unfairly on Britain's shoulders, must arrange to pay on revised terms the debt we owe America.

Then we come to the nations of Europe. There has been the traditional friendship between Italy and this country for a great number of years. That friendship was broken when Italy decided to annex Abyssinia, thus

breaking her solemn undertakings as a member of the League of Nations. As the dominating member of the League, Britain did her best, short of opening fire with her guns, to prevent the rape of Ethiopia. Because of our faithfulness to our bond we went to the very verge of war. It is a miracle that we did not find ourselves in open conflict with Mussolini, with all the unforeseen repercussions that might have followed.

It was Mr. Chamberlain who made a speech one night outside the House of Commons in which he denounced the policy of sanctions then in force against Italy as midsummer madness. He was then, remember, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The British Government had not made its attitude clear. I believe that Chamberlain made that speech without consultation with Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Eden. It had the authentic Chamberlain touch, which can be most drastic and unexpected. At any rate, sanctions were dead from that moment. But we did not recognise the conquest of Abyssinia. The poor little Abyssinian Emperor was roaming around the country houses and gardens of England, and is still here. His Legation remains open in London and the representatives of the Negus were invited to the Coronation. One has only to turn back the pages of history in the South African War to imagine what Britain would have felt like if Germany had continued to deal with South Africa as an independent state after our conquest. I claim, and I think most clear-thinking people must agree with me, that the purpose of the League of Nations was to restrain a wrongdoer. It was never visualised as an agency to continue to hunt down the criminal after the crime had been committed.

Italy is in complete possession of Abyssinia. To refuse to recognise that fact is to deny truth itself. There is not a single government in Europe that would exist for one day if it were suggested that it should invade Abyssinia now with the purpose of restoring that back-

ward country to the possession of the unfortunate little Negus. Therefore Mr. Chamberlain should recognise the conquest at once, while granting to the former Emperor the time-honoured sanctuary which England gives to all unfortunate rulers. When that is done, we must sit down with Italy and work out a partnership agreement in the Mediterranean. In due time the natural warmth of the Italian people toward Britain would return, and the menacing shadow of Anglo-Italian discord would be at an end.

What about France? There must be no equivocation about our position with her. For all time we stand as the friend of France, guaranteeing her frontiers against unprovoked invasion of any nation or combination of nations.

Germany? That is not easy. One of the curses of a war such as that of 1914 is the sense of frustration which follows it. With the inevitable economic collapse which is an integral part of modern warfare, the normal ambitions of mankind are rendered sterile. Tragic as it is in the case of an individual, what must it be when a great nation like Germany faces frustration on every side?

I agree that we have little reason to trust her—but what is the alternative? One of our statesmen once said in private conversation discussing the subject of Germany: "What would you do with a man-eating tiger? Fight him or get into bed with him?" That is clever, but it does not get us very far. The alternative might be to feed the tiger with the milk of human kindness until its teeth become soft through the lack of use and it gives up its passion for tearing human meat to pieces. Germany has more to give to the world than any other country outside of Britain. At the present moment she is giving nothing. German art, German philosophy, German humanitarianism have been crushed by the form of government which was created out of the

German frustration. Therefore I would consider the justification of giving back to Germany some of her colonies. I agree that we could not do so without the most definite and workable pledges to safeguard our Empire communications, but somehow, in some way it can be done, and I am convinced that if that came about we should begin to see the dawn of a new miracle, a peace-minded Germany.

Let there be no mistake. No one power, and no logical combination of powers, could force us either to acknowledge Italy's Abyssinian conquest or to give any colonies to Germany. We are strong enough to refuse any concessions and to defy Europe to do its worst.

Yet that could only produce a sterile period of living in the shadow of war with the armaments race growing more fierce as each day passes, until bankruptcy or war would engulf Western civilisation in a final disaster.

I wonder what Mr. Chamberlain will do.

He is never dismayed by the magnitude of a situation. I saw him in the crisis of 1931, when his calm courage steadied all around him. A little later he achieved the greatest conversion scheme in financial history, although the experts said he would fail. Even the gross blunder of his Profits Tax had the quality of courage about it and, at least, he did not leave the problem of meeting rearmament expenditure to his successor.

He has never courted popular acclaim. He has never hidden the truth from the people. Nothing will persuade him to look upon the nation as a nursery whose inhabitants must be told happy stories so that they will sleep well.

On the contrary, he has seemed at times to prefer giving them bad dreams so that when they awake they will find the dawn of reality encouraging by contrast with the black fantasies of the night.

Neville Chamberlain stands at the entrance to the



bridge which he has built so wisely and so swiftly. Will he take a gamble and cross it?—or will he say that it is sufficient to have created it and leave the crossing to others?

With some knowledge of his character, I believe that the third of the Chamberlains will take the gamble for peace.

# *The King Speaks*

LONDON is a city of moods. It can sulk like a woman who has lived too much and has lost interest in being interesting. It can be vulgarly hysterical, as when a harmless young man like Robert Taylor arrives from Hollywood. It can be solemn, portentous, dignified, light-hearted, gloomy, fascinating.

This autumn it has been fretful. The Non-Intervention Committee has kept on meeting, disagreeing, collapsing and starting all over again. The Japanese have gone on apologising and shooting British subjects—usually in that order. Mussolini has continued agreeing and disagreeing with Mr. Eden.

Then the American Stock Market has insisted on diving to the depths, carrying the British Stock Market with it as a drowning man pulls the nearest swimmer below the waves.

Is it another slump?

Is it war?

Those are fascinating subjects of conversation. But they grow tedious after a time, so London sulked. Plays were put on and taken off so quickly that one never heard of them. Tommy Farr had a lawsuit or two, but they were not much fun. People gave dinner parties and told each other how much they had lost in American securities. Autumn shed its leaves like tears and moaned a requiem in the parks. Outsiders won the Cambridgeshire and the Caeserewitch and the bookmakers announced as usual that they were ruined.

The new Lord Mayor was chosen, but no one cared. President Roosevelt made a great speech at Chicago, and the State Department in Washington spent the next fortnight explaining it to London. Mr. Chamberlain

made a speech and then went home to bed, ill. Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that the industrial future was bright, and the market went down for the third time.

Just about then it was realised that if Parliament was going to close for the Christmas recess it would first have to open.

Accordingly, the Marchioness of Londonderry decided to revive her "eve of the session" receptions at Londonderry House. This is such an exclusive affair that it takes anything from twenty to forty-five minutes to reach the head of the stairway and shake hands with the Prime Minister, Lady Londonderry, Mrs. Chamberlain and Lord Londonderry.

All Government M.P.'s are asked. So are Conservative peers. Then a certain number of political journalists are on the list, so I was certain to get in on one ticket or the other. In fact I could have gone twice. After that a few ambassadors, pro-consuls, newspaper barons and authors are included just to fill up the crevices, if any.

So we turned up in medals, uniforms, tiaras, ermines, turbans and sashes, and moved like a glacier toward the head of the stairs.

And suddenly when Lord Bessborough's stately form had cut off what air was left, like the *Ranger* getting windward of *Endeavour II.*, and two National Liberals were telescoping me, I felt a tingle of excitement course through my blood.

This was London, the centre of the world. Here were power, magnificence and Government. The stately house with its glittering assembly rang with the talk of the court, the camp and the senate.

Here was the Conservative Party of Britain—not the Conservative Party of Ontario, which seems to have lost its soul, its newspaper and an election all at once—but the party of Disraeli and Balfour, and Bonar Law and

Baldwin. If there had been room, I would have stuck out my chest with political pride.

So we shook hands with the Prime Minister and Lady Londonderry, then with Mrs. Chamberlain and Lord Londonderry, and after that we went out by the back entrance to hunt for our chauffeur in a world that seemed entirely populated by other men's chauffeurs.

The next morning at 11.45 the King was to open his first Parliament. This is a spectacle of such historic interest that even the peers have to ballot to get into their own House, and peeresses are selected by rotation. As for Members of the House of Commons, only a limited number can get as far as the Bar of the House of Lords, where they stand like a chorus of townsmen watching a pageant. Even for this privilege the M.P. has to ballot a long time ahead.

At 10.30 that morning I decided that I must go to the Opening. It is true that I had neglected to ballot for a ticket, but the spell of London and Londonderry House was on me. The great old town was stirring. Something more permanent and more important than stock markets was happening. But how to get to Westminster when half of London's population was in the way? Is there not something in the law that no M.P. can be obstructed when leaving the Houses of Parliament? If that is so, how much more essential that he should not be obstructed from going there.

Strengthened by the unassailable logic of this conclusion, I drove to the Arch of Constitution Hill at Hyde Park Corner, and was duly confronted by a policeman who was guarding the sacred entrance. He regarded my silk hat with suspicion, but treated the M.P.'s badge on the car with respect. Saluting smartly, he gave way. Thereupon commenced as strange a journey as I can remember. There were thousands of troops and tens of thousands of people lining the route, but there was only one motor car to be seen for the entire distance of

Constitution Hill, the Mall and the Horse Guards. And that car was mine. I would have liked to have gone back and got my son—this would have been just his meat—but that was impracticable. He was at school imbibing that indifference to learning which is a prelude to a successful career.

Therefore, for a mile and a half or so we made our solitary way, while women peered excitedly into the car and seemed disappointed that I was not the Duchess of Kent. One small boy did cheer or else he was crying. A subaltern looked anxiously toward us, wondering whether he had not better give a general salute. With a flourish we drove through the Horse Guards into Whitehall, still the solitary car in that part of London. Then with an enveloping movement we glided into Palace Yard and came to rest.

So far, so good. The next question was how to get into the Lords without a ticket. It was all very well to give this modern version of John Gilpin's ride, but what if one had to stand outside like a small boy at a circus?

And just then the incredible happened. A colleague of mine in the Commons came out and we stopped—as they say in England—to exchange the time of day. A useless proceeding with Big Ben just above our heads. Eventually I explained my dilemma.

"My dear fellow," he said, "take my ticket."

I protested.

"By all means have it," he said. "I was not going to use it. I have a new periscope which I want to try out in the crowds."

Whereupon he produced two lenses on a stick, by which I gathered he could just see a balloon if it was directly above him, and went away happy.

The House of Lords on a late autumn morning. The sun shining through the windows with a brave pretence that it was still summer outside.

Look upon this scene: Peers in velvet cloaks with

ermine collars. Bishops in their robes. Law lords hooded like the Klu-Klux-Klan. Foreign ambassadors in the uniform of the *Corps Diplomatique*. Peers' sons looking just like anybody's sons. In the one-row galleries on either side sat the peeresses in evening dress, with tiaras flashing as if to create the illusion that it was midnight instead of morning.

There is no explaining the English woman. She has utterly failed to hold her own on the film against her American rival. Many critics have claimed that while the Englishman remains supreme in the masculine world, the English woman has lost ground before the onslaught of her sisters from France, Austria, America and Canada. Yet that morning I think I never saw women more beautiful than those that were assembled in the galleries. The Saxon loveliness of their fair hair, the classic perfection of their features, the poise and grace of their bearing—they sent the mind back to those distant days when knights-errant risked their lives in the lists for a smile from their ladies faire. Lady Diana Duff Cooper, once the Lady Diana Manners, the most famous beauty in England, looked like a rose that is immune to the passing of the seasons. Yet it was Mrs. Chamberlain who stole the picture. She wore a sort of blue cavalry cloak (this may be wrong but it was something like that) and looked as fresh as if she had never sat up after sunset. Yet the night before, at Londonderry House, she had shaken hands with London's exclusive four hundred—or was it four thousand?

And while we were gazing at this scene of unbelievable colour there came that element of drama which is so utterly the essence of Westminster. The cheering of the crowds outside grew louder. We knew from the sound that the King and Queen had arrived in their golden pantomime coach. A messenger strode up the Hall to the loyal Commons, and on behalf of His Majesty commanded the presence of Mr. Speaker and such

Members of the House as wished to follow him to the Bar of the House of Lords. For be it known that, great as is the position of the King, he cannot enter the House of Commons. Charles I. put an end to that by overplaying his hand.

So down the Hall strode Mr. Speaker in his wig and robes—austere, pale, enigmatic, the embodiment of the power of the Commons by whose permission the Lords continues to exist. I watched Mrs. Chamberlain's face, thinking that she would look down to see Mr. Speaker and the Prime Minister arrive together, but her face was turned away. Alas for pageantry! Alas for history! That eminent commoner, Mr. Chamberlain, exhausted by the trying ordeal of the night before, was in bed with gout. That lean, æsthetic figure had succumbed to the disease of the ancient aristocracy.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, surrounded by a bevy of Ministers, gazed at the assembled peers who, in turn, gazed at them. There was a fanfare of trumpets from without, strangely reminiscent of the Coronation. The lights were slowly lowered. A grizzly autumn mist crept over the scene, as if all the robes and diamonds belonged to home-comers from a fancy dress ball who had been caught by the shattering disillusionment of daylight.

In that mist, the thing that met the eye most strikingly was the raised throne with the two chairs side by side. The mind went back to the two previous Openings of this historic and dramatic Parliament. In 1935 King George V. had failed to appear because of the death of his sister. We did not know then that we would not meet him again until we filed into Westminster Hall to receive his dead body.

Last year there had been one chair. A lonely and pitiful sight. The young King Edward VIII. had opened the solitary Parliament of his reign, the reign that had only a few weeks to go.

And now . . .

The lights came on like the crescendo of an orchestra. Slowly King George VI. and his Queen came into the Chamber. His Majesty looked so young, so slim, so unaffectedly natural in his dignity, his manhood and his gentleness. Never in all my experience of men have I seen one grow to such stature in so short a time.

She walked by his side, the Queen of Great Britain and of the Dominions, the wife who had done so much to make her husband worthy of the position to which destiny had called him so swiftly, so cruelly, so magnificently.

The Lord Chancellor handed the Speech to His Majesty, and we all sat down. Without rising, the King spread it before him. By custom and tradition the Speech consists of the political programme of the coming session and it is prepared by the Cabinet. The King reads it.

The Queen glanced toward him with the suggestion of a smile, and then looked straight ahead with a calmness which deceived no one.

The silence was painful. So many present had memories of speeches by the King years ago when, as the Duke of York, he forced himself to undergo the ordeal, although it was an embarrassment to his hearers and an agony to himself.

It is true that he had broadcast well on the night of the Coronation, but the wise ones had said it was his voice on a gramophone record. It was absolutely untrue, but the rumour had spread.

*"My Lords and Members of the House of Commons."*

The words carried softly but clearly through the Chamber. They were spoken slowly and impressively, but without any suggestion of hesitation.

*"My relations with foreign powers continue to be friendly."*

The familiar words came with a new dignity. The King still spoke slowly, but it was in a voice at once



manly and musical. It had the natural resonance of a voice that is perfectly produced, and there was not a listener at the farthest end of the Chamber who could not hear without effort. And every word was enunciated with its full richness.

So the Speech unfolded itself page after page. Taking his time, but with a confidence that never faltered, the King turned each page and gave to every item the importance that it deserved.

More than once he looked up to add emphasis to a passage, and we saw the face of a man whose force of character has conquered every obstacle.

The Queen's face was a study of quiet, womanly pride. She wore her crown of platinum and diamonds with the dark blue riband of the Order of the Garter, but it was her eyes that people watched—the eyes of a wife valiantly proud of her husband.

*"I pray that, under the blessings of Almighty God, the outcome of your deliberations may advance the happiness and well-being of my people and the peace of the world."*

The familiar, impressive words were nobly spoken. Slowly, as if even in that action he would not hurry, he folded the Speech and handed it back to the Lord Chancellor.

The spell was broken. The ordeal—for many had been afraid for him—was over. With his lithe, youthful figure he led the way, with the Queen, out of the Chamber to the cheering crowds waiting outside.

The Government's policy? For the moment no one cared. The young King who had come to the throne neither by the hand of death nor by choice, but out of the need of the people, had scored a triumph of personality and character.

The sun was shining as they entered their fairy-story coach, but if it had been raining torrents I warrant there would have been sunshine in the hearts of the King and Queen.

## *A Letter to "Mac"*

THE OTHER day I received a letter from Canada. This is not a new experience in itself, but there was a forcefulness about the writing, a vigour in the opening sentence, which warned me that this was to be no fireside reverie.

"Dear Mr. Beverley Baxter; (it began)

"Why don't you tell the truth when you write for *Maclean's Magazine*?"

That is not a bad opening for a letter. It has something of the classic quality of the famous, "'Hell!' said the duchess, who up to this time had taken no part in the conversation"—which was adjudged the most nearly perfect opening for a short story.

My correspondent, however, was not content merely to spear me with a rhetorical question. Having, as it were, broken down my guard, he advanced for the kill.

"You are obviously a paid propagandist for the British Government. You pretend that Chamberlain, Eden and company are a bunch of statesmen with courage and vision, whereas you know as well as I do that they are a lot of old maids who would run from a mouse. Why didn't they stop Japan invading Manchuria? Why didn't they stop Italy beating up Abyssinia when the whole League was with them? Why did they abandon Sanctions when it was bringing Italy to her knees? Why did they let Germany get away with rearmament? Why don't they do something to Japan now instead of apologising every time an Englishman is bumped off by a Japanese plane?

"Tell the truth, Mr. Baxter. England is finished. It has lost its guts. There is no use your going on trying to convince Canada of anything else. I like your writing

and I always read your articles, just to see how long it will be before you give us the truth."

Now that is what I call a vigorous letter. It is concise, clear, leaving the recipient in no doubt as to the feelings of the writer. Nor do I doubt its sincerity. Such resentment is not artificial. It is too crude, too violent for artifice. If it springs from the heart more than the head, that is unimportant. The thing is that it springs.

What is more, I am well aware that this letter represents more than an isolated point of view. In different terms perhaps, many other people are thinking the same thing. There is no glory in Britain's post-War foreign policy. There is humiliation piled on humiliation. I do not deny that. The shade of the great Palmerston must walk the terraces of Westminster with uneasy steps these nights.

Therefore I have decided to reply to my correspondent in an open letter. I trust that he will not take exception to this procedure. It is a matter of public interest which we are discussing and not a personal issue. Therefore I begin:

MY DEAR MR. MAC,—May I thank you for your energetic letter? It is always interesting to have the views of one's readers, even when they are at variance with one's own. Believe me, I do not resent your candour. It shows that Alberta still produces men whose convictions are as bracing as its climate. May I, however, first deal with a purely personal matter?

You state that I am a paid propagandist for the British Government. That is not the truth, and it is rather stupid of you to believe such a thing. The British Government has no paid propagandist save the commercial attaches whose business is quite openly to boost the purchase of British goods.

Believe it or not, *Maclean's Magazine* pays me for these articles. Desirable as such a consummation would be,

I do not get paid at both ends. It is quite true that I draw a salary of 3,000 dollars a year as a Member of Parliament, but since my constituency expenses are 5,000 dollars a year, you will hardly claim that my opinions are purchased for money.

I may be wrong in the conclusions to which I come on public affairs. No man is infallible. But the opinions which I express in this magazine are those which I hold with a sincerity no less than yours.

Now, let us get down to your case against British foreign policy. Let us examine what justification there is in your charge that Britain's backbone has become like the spine of a jellyfish.

Go back with me just for a moment to the end of the Peace Treaty at Versailles, when an American President with high purpose and a complete ignorance of geography, a French Premier with a consuming fear and hatred which he had nursed since 1870, and a British Premier who had drunk deep of the rich wine of world power, had concluded a mad Peace Treaty, which had only one redeeming feature, a plan for a League of Nations.

To use your own word, there was no lack of "guts" in M. Clemenceau or Mr. Lloyd George. Even you, who obviously worship the quality of strength in public men, could hardly complain of what these gentlemen did to conquered Germany.

However, Mr. Lloyd George fell from power in 1922. He was a great man with the courage of a lion and the gay heart of a cavalier, but destiny had tired of him, as it had of Napoleon and all men who have become too powerful for human stature.

He was succeeded by a fellow countryman of ours, Bonar Law, once of New Brunswick. Under the weary hands of this tired but fine-souled statesman, the first attempt at the liquidation of the War spirit began.

When France marched into the Ruhr to teach default-

ing Germany a lesson (how you must have approved of that march, my friend), Bonar Law refused to let Britain go with her.

It was the first break between the victors. It was the beginning of the end of the dream of France that Germany would pursue her future destiny under the iron heel of British and French Imperialism.

"We must have an enduring peace in Europe," said Mr. Bonar Law, but his weary frame could not support the burden. Was he a coward, this fellow Canadian of ours, whose ashes rest among the nation's great in Westminster Abbey?

Stanley Baldwin came. At home and abroad his one plea was, "Give peace in our time, O Lord." In a short time he was succeeded by Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour Premier of Britain. In domestic policy there was little in common between these two men; in foreign policy they were as one.

Under Ramsay MacDonald's inspiration, the first disarmament conference had opened. Britain, the conqueror, gave a lead to the world in the reduction of armaments. From country to country, almost like a traveller with goods to sell, that brave but gentle creature, Ramsay MacDonald, went talking and preaching the brotherhood of man.

Under the alternate regimes of MacDonald and Baldwin, the continuity of foreign policy went on. Britain had given her bond to the League, and Britain was determined to honour that bond. For the first time in her recent history, Great Britain was allowing her naval and military strength to fall below the safety level. The idealistic gamble for peace was in full fling.

There were warning voices, but if Britain would not give the lead what other nation could?

So the story unfolds until the crisis of 1931, when Baldwin and MacDonald joined forces under a National Government.

The rumbling of German rearmament could be plainly heard. The military intensification of Italian Fascism was inescapable. Britain refused to alter her course. She was purged of the spirit of war and almost of the weapons of war.

I do not defend that policy of military weakness, but it was sincere and altruistic. Never had a great nation hazarded so heavy a stake for so glorious a prize.

Then came Manchuria. Britain had scrapped the loyal partnership of Japan on the ideal of Anglo-American understanding. Was that wrong? From almost every materialistic and military factor, it was. It cost us our security and our influence in the Far East. But the English have unusual powers of patience and clairvoyance. They are more conscious of the centuries than we are. They knew that in the years ahead, the communion of the English-speaking nations would have to take precedence over all other considerations, if the world was to be saved for civilisation.

You will ask what Japan could have done against the combined forces of the League. Do you imagine that Japan did not also ask herself that question and come to a definite conclusion?

France would not send a ship to the Far East; neither would Italy. The United States was not a member of the League. Russia was in internal upheaval. It would have been Britain alone against Japan, with Singapore our only naval base, and still unfinished. Even then, we would have worn Japan down in time, but does any one doubt that the sparks of conflagration would not have reached Europe and set that continent ablaze?

The conception of the League as a super-armed state was always insane. It was the insistence upon its punitive character at Geneva that robbed it of its moral power.

So the first of Britain's hours of humiliation began. The little yellow men of Tokyo snapped their fingers at the British giant.

I did not like it any more than you, Mr. Mac—, but, tell me, are you quite sure that if you had been the British Prime Minister, you would have ordered the Grand Fleet into the Pacific?

Now the harvest of disaster ripens before our eyes. After Manchuria, we could not hide the facts from ourselves. The gamble for peace had failed. Our weakness, which was to inspire all other nations to universal meekness, had produced the very opposite effect. The spirit of Bismarck and Frederick the Great had entered the soul of an Austrian sign-painter named Hitler. The shadow of a resentful and rearmed Germany was once more upon Europe.

Mr. Baldwin saw the writing on the wall. Hating war and the implements of war, he ordered an immense rearmament campaign for Great Britain. The dreams of Ramsay MacDonald, Bonar Law, and Stanley Baldwin had been banished from the skies by the whirling propellers of bombing German aeroplanes.

Then came Signor Mussolini, who ordered his army to attack Abyssinia, the nation whose entry into the League had been sponsored by him.

This was no Far East challenge. It was right at the very doorstep of the League. Geneva had to accept or deny its destiny.

The League met. It showed a strength of purpose that was electrifying. After the first outburst they got down to details. It turned out that there was a complete unanimity from Denmark, Bolivia, China, Rumania, and Switzerland, that Britain and France should take action against the aggressor.

The British Fleet concentrated in the Mediterranean. While, true to our obligations, we were risking contact with the actuality of war. I for one hoped that the League would not falter, even though I knew that it consisted for all real purposes of Britain and France.

Now, Mr. Mac—, I am going to give you a little

history in the raw and it will not make very pleasant reading.

You must remember that a short time before all this, Italy and France had signed a pact of friendship. In the eyes of France, twice invaded by Germany, there is always and only one enemy, therefore she had grasped at the support of Italy.

Therefore, with an accurate knowledge of this sentiment in Paris, the British Foreign Office asked the French Government if its fleet would combine with the British if action against Italy became inevitable.

France said, "No."

Now for something that has never been published before.

The British authorities asked another question to this effect: If the British Fleet became embroiled in war with the Italians could the French ports in the Mediterranean be used as naval bases for His Majesty's ships?

The reply of France was to the effect that she did not think it would be necessary or advisable for the British Fleet to take any action.

You have not heard this before?

Well, you have heard it now.

The massacre of the Abyssinians went on according to plan. A large number of people believed that the massed strength of Italy would be defeated by the Abyssinian rains. In fact, so convinced were they that the savages with their umbrellas and their spears would prove invincible that the *Toronto Star* immortalised itself on the very outbreak of hostilities by printing a banner headline across its entire front page, "Duce's Army in Full Retreat."

There were others who took the opposite view. Among them was Sir Samuel Hoare, the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain. On the invitation of M. Laval, the French Prime Minister, he went to Paris and arranged a sensible and workable plan for ending the war. It was



known in advance to be agreeable both to Signor Mussolini and the Emperor Haile Selassie. It would have left Haile Selassie at least as a dummy king; it would have kept for the Abyssinians a considerable measure of independence, and it would have removed the threat of war from Europe.

The League of Nations Union, however, raised such a cry in England that Mr. Baldwin bowed to the storm. These professional pacifists refused to have the war stopped. They believed that righteousness must triumph, and that a million Italian soldiers would be buried in the swamps of Abyssinia.

Sir Samuel Hoare, as you know, paid the penalty of realism in a romantic world. Anthony Eden took his place and the game went on.

Eventually the rains must have left off, or Abyssinia's supply of spears must have given out. At any rate, Italy won.

But Sanctions had been applied by the members of the League. Once more, Great Britain was true to her bond. Anglo-Italian trade had virtually ceased to exist, and it is only fair to say that France was equally honest in this matter. So we had the strange spectacle of a war being over, but the preventive measures still being carried on. The poor, bewildered League, which had been created for the purpose of stopping a war at the beginning, was now playing the rôle of the administrator of punishment after the event.

Finally one day, under the inspiration of Neville Chamberlain, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Eden stood up and announced the cessation of the policy of Sanctions. More cowardice, I suppose. Nor were you alone, Mr. Mac—, in that point of view. All the pacifists whose intervention had succeeded in the extermination of Abyssinia, joined in the outcry against Eden for ending something which was threatening a real war between Italy and Britain.

Now for another bit of wholesome truth—or perhaps I should say unwholesome truth.

As I said before, France and Britain had cut their trade with Italy down to virtually nothing. Fifty-five per cent of the member states of the League who had sworn to do the same thing had doubled, and in one or two cases trebled, their trade with Italy. Think it over, my friend, when you so glibly decide that Britain has played a foolish and cowardly part in not utilising the allies who were ready to die with her for a great ideal. Need I go on?

The Spanish Civil war broke out. I forget now which side you wanted us to help, and which to exterminate. But poor old Britain refused to plunge Europe into a gigantic war because some ex-bullfighter fired a pistol in Spain.

Patiently, wisely and honourably it drew a cordon of sanity around unhappy Spain and, though the sparks flew high, they never ignited the neighbouring states.

There was no glory in that, I suppose. There never is glory in keeping the peace, but only in tearing the limbs from young bodies and blinding the eyes of youth that have not yet looked upon the glory of life.

And finally, Japan, in the year of our Lord, 1937.

Here I confess my blood boiled, and I found myself almost at one with you. But there were wiser heads than ours in control in London.

Without America's co-operation it would have been a war between Britain and Japan, with Italy ready to act the moment we had been drawn into the quagmire of the Pacific.

But if war was inadvisable, why not a boycott of Japan? In other words, if you can't hurt you can sting.

Japan wanted nothing more. It would have been a pretext to seize Hong-Kong or at any rate to blockade Hong-Kong.

And from what port, Mr. Mac—, do you think that

war material has been reaching China? From Montreal or Vancouver? I refuse to answer my own question, but if you cannot solve the riddle then you are unworthy of your Scottish ancestry.

Forgive me for the length of this letter, but I feel strongly on the subject.

If you want glory and tub-thumping, you won't get it from the present British Government.

But perhaps your son and mine will find time when they are grown men to look back upon these days, and think gratefully of the Administration at Westminster that dared so much for peace, and carried on its shoulders such burdens as have seldom been borne in the long history of statesmanship.

Yours sincerely,

A. BEVERLEY BAXTER.

P.S.: Write again some time—but not just yet.—  
A.B.B.

# *Democracy Takes Its Toll*

LAST SUNDAY I drove in from the country to the Foreign Office to attend a press conference with Anthony Eden. Downing Street, which not only houses the Premier but supplies the entrance to the Foreign Office, is impressive enough at any time, but on a misty winter late afternoon its sombre quiet suggests that, deep in the frozen earth, strange and incalculable forces are moving.

It was a huge room in which we saw the Foreign Secretary. There was one painting, a fireplace, a table and chairs, while the walls were decorated with Turkish stars. That may not be the correct description, but there was a suggestion of the Bosphorus about the stars, and I know no other way to describe them.

As usual, Europe was in a state of crisis, although, just for a change, the Far Eastern situation was more urgent.

Eden shook hands and then sat down at the table facing us. He wore an ordinary lounge suit with a soft collar, and one missed the immaculate fashion-plate appearance of his early days. His brain was as clear as ever and his manner as unassuming. What is more, he showed splendid judgment in the extent to which he was perfectly frank and then carefully reticent, according to the exigencies of the conversation. But this was a different Eden from the one who, less than two years ago, took on the job of "the man with a load of mischief." His eyes were deep in shadows. Where once his movements expressed unbounded vitality, now they seemed the result of restlessness and fatigue.

For days he had been balancing the chances of an understanding among France, Germany, Italy and

Britain, and for days there had been a whispering campaign against him. It was loud enough to be heard in every political drawing-room.

He had had a cold which necessitated his absence from the Foreign Office for a day. "Anthony's cold will get worse," said the wise ones cryptically. They even prophesied the course of events.

"You see, Italy won't have anything to do with Eden, and Germany is bored with him. Chamberlain does not want to fire him because Eden still has a following in the country. But when his cold reaches his chest, he will reluctantly be forced to resign and become a political martyr. This is not the kind of a cold which the doctors can cure."

But after a day the young Foreign Secretary came back to work, and got on with his heartbreak task.

And what a task it is!

A Cabinet Minister said to me the other day: "If, instead of Eden, they had offered me the choice of the Foreign Secretaryship or a knife with which to cut my throat, I would not have hesitated. I would have taken the knife. When Eden succeeded Samuel Hoare in foreign affairs, he must have known that he did not have a gambler's chance of success but merely the choice between degrees of failure."

I do not know what the future holds for Eden. For months on end he has had no respite by day or night, no holiday, no Sundays that are different from Mondays, no chance to sit back and survey the world with any sense of detachment.

In the War he was a front-line soldier. Periodically, his battalion was relieved, and the young subaltern could loaf the hours away until it was time to go back again. In the war of foreign affairs, he is in the front line all the time.

When we were leaving the conference, some one asked him about a certain point of policy. "I am seeing the

Prime Minister to-night," he said, "to discuss that very thing." That was Eden's Sunday. While others golfed or went to church, or played bridge by their firesides, he was a prisoner with the two sides of Downing Street as his prison walls.

A few days before all this, Michael Arlen and I were lunching at the House of Commons. Michael was in grand form, as befits the author of *The Green Hat*, and I am afraid our laughter was not totally in keeping with the decorum of the surroundings.

There was a stir of interest behind us. Eden, his Parliamentary private secretary, and Viscount Cranborne, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had come in to luncheon. Cranborne and the P.P.S. spread napkins over their knees. Eden spread a red dispatch box. He used one hand for eating and the other for documents. So engrossed was he that it would not have startled us if he had eaten a document and put a piece of toast into the dispatch box.

Three hours later I saw him flushed with excitement as he stood in his place in the House of Commons and hurled these words to deafening cheers:

*"We shall co-operate with every nation, but we shall accept dictation from none."*

What is to be the end of the story? I do not know. All that we can see is that somewhere along the road which Eden has traversed these last two terrible years, he has left his youth.

I was thinking of all this when I went to Westminster Abbey for the memorial service for Ramsay MacDonald. Does democracy realise the price it exacts from its leaders? Does it care? We rightly demand a free Parliament and an unfettered press. Such things are the very pillars of democracy.

How simple, by comparison, is the task of a dictator,

with newspapers muzzled and Parliament abolished! Freedom can be a more cruel master than tyranny.

Just before Mr. Ramsay MacDonald sailed on his last voyage from which he was not to return alive, he said to a friend of mine: "I am nearing the end. These," (touching his head and his heart) "are tired and weary. Sleep makes no difference. This is a weariness which can only end one way."

It may have been a subconscious realisation of this that prompted Stanley Baldwin (the title of Earl is a poor thing to attach to so great a man) to send a note to MacDonald three weeks before his embarkation.

"We have not met for so many months," wrote that great English gentleman. "When you come to London, can we not have an hour together?"

So they lunched at Ramsay's modest house at Hampstead, where the pictures and books are so numerous that the ordinary furniture is hard put to it to find breathing space. For a whole afternoon the former Conservative and Labour leaders, these two men who had formed the National Government, who had saved Britain from disaster, and who had resigned from the Cabinet on the same day, lived again for an afternoon the history which they had written for England.

A day or so after Ramsay had sailed, Baldwin went to the Guildhall to receive the freedom of the City of London. Compliments and tributes were heaped upon him in language which outblushed the rose. Baldwin listened, but his thoughts were straying.

"There is another ex-Premier," he said abruptly, "who is literally worn out through public service. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has had far less than his share of the gratitude which is due him. I am in the best position to judge, for I served under him. He never spared himself."

The public was touched by Baldwin's generosity, and was also rendered more than a little uncomfortable by

the suggestion of ingratitude toward the "forgotten statesman."

One or two newspapers made a half-hearted attempt to pay tribute to the man who had gone abroad. But a murder or a wedding, or a Japanese incident stole the headlines, and he was once more allowed to relapse into obscurity.

Then, out of the blue, came the message from the ship: "Mr. Ramsay MacDonald died this evening."

It shocked the whole community. In Parliament men looked at each other as if something rather shameful had happened. I wondered as to the thoughts of a certain Socialist M.P. who, during MacDonald's last faltering speech in the House, had shouted: "Sit down, man, you are making a fool of yourself." The Socialists' faces were grim. They had hounded their former leader until his power of concentration had gone and only the supreme gentleness of his spirit remained. At Seaham Harbour, where he had gone down to ignominious defeat in 1935 (the ignominy belongs to the electorate, and not to him), the Socialists had jeered and mocked him until he could not be heard on any platform.

Memories . . . and not too pleasant.

On the last day of Baldwin's regime in the House, Ramsay sat as a private Member. No one noticed him except to comment that it seemed queer to find him away from the front bench. The hatred of the Socialists and the indifference of the Conservatives were complete.

Conscience, however, is stronger than memory. Ramsay had put to sea on his last voyage, a forgotten man. He came back from it on one of His Majesty's ships of war, with guards of honour waiting to receive his body. In Westminster Abbey the people and the princes came, the priests and politicians, the villagers of Scotland, and the highest officers of state, the King's ministers and the King's brother, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and MacDonald's own simple family circle.



Brahms's music soared to the rafters as they carried his ashes through the Abbey, and the heart of Britain wept for this lonely servant who had risen from obscurity to greatness—only to find that the crown he had earned was one of ingratitude and scorn.

It is not the noblest chapter in our political history. I agree that the MacDonald controversy will go on for years, but he was bigger than his enemies, bigger than those who ignored him, bigger than his own mistakes.

For the moment, however, we must leave him—another statesman worn out by public service, free at last from the storms and the winds of controversy.

Yet, even as one surveys the human wreckage of political life there comes the inevitable exception. Mr. Lloyd George was at the memorial service. The father of the House of Commons, now in his seventy-fifth year.

His snow-white hair is like a lion's mane. His movements are dynamic. The energy from his batteries galvanises the air about him. His eyes turn quickly from side to side, like a duellist holding a dozen assailants at bay.

He would take office to-morrow if he could get it. He would willingly combine the posts of Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Minister for Agriculture. For half a crown or less, he would abolish the whole Cabinet and do the job himself.

Yet he took such a strain in the War years as would have killed any normal man. As second in command, Bonar Law emerged from the same ordeal a broken man, whose fine spirit would have been unequal to a long period of premiership, even if his body had not failed him.

Mr. Lloyd George's enemies say that the little Welshman had the callousness of the dictator in his blood, and that the losses on the battlefield were never more than vital statistics to him. Others argue that he had a gaiety of heart which was really a form of timidity—a dread of

facing reality. Others attribute his iron nerve to his ability to sleep at any time, as if sleep could build character.

I shall not attempt to add to these excursions any explanation. Here is a man on whom crisis, discouragement and intolerable strain left no visible mark. Is it possible that he possessed a courage beyond the normal limits of man? Was he, perhaps, less human in his emotions, and, therefore, less vulnerable to heartbreak and collapse? It might well be contended that Lloyd George is a living proof that those who pay too heavy a price for public service do so because of their own inherent defects in body and character.

If there are those of such mind, I would ask them to turn to one of the six pall-bearers who walked in the Abbey beside MacDonald's coffin.

Two years ago, Stanley Baldwin would come into the House of Commons with a rolling countryman's gait, as if he were completing a ten-mile walk along one of his beloved lanes of Worcester. He had endured for years a merciless newspaper attack of ridicule and condemnation. Twice he had been defeated at the polls, and each time he had to face the anger and distrust of many of his supporters.

Throughout the post-War years that spelled violence and revolution in almost every other country, his essential decency and strength of purpose kept Britain straight.

It seemed as the years went on that here was another man that nothing could mark. Then one day he was not at his place. Those newspapers who always kept their wreaths ready for him said he was going to resign. For five days they repeated that he was finished and would be succeeded by "a stronger man."

Now we know that Mr. Baldwin's doctors urged him at that time to retire. They warned him of the consequences of going on.

"I cannot resign now," said Baldwin. "There are one

or two situations that I must not leave to my successor."

One of those situations came to a head. The abdication crisis was upon the nation. Calmly, justly, but indomitably, Baldwin changed the history of Britain, and left the Empire stronger than it had been before.

Then, and not till then he laid down his heavy load. "I shall be able to rest now and read," he said.

But at the Abbey we saw with a shock an old man limping with such pain that he had to use a stick even for those few yards. The months since he had left the House might almost have been years.

The books that he had longed to read have failed to prove the companions which they would have been in former years. His nerves refuse to accept them as substitutes for the clash of events. Long walks that he had planned with the healing balm of sun and wind and the sting of rain upon the cheeks are ruled out by the pain of walking.

He stayed in office two years too long, but men called to such a position cannot time their exits like an actor.

Democracy . . .

The lure of public life, the love of power which is inherent in all men, the desire to serve one's generation—these things will always draw men into politics.

Sometimes, though, when we speak contemptuously of national leaders, denying to them the virtues which we so unhesitatingly attribute to ourselves, charging them with selfishness or worse, we might do well to think for a moment of the price they pay.

# *This Chinese Business*

NO DOUBT you shared our excitement when the *Endeavour I.* turned up safe from somewhere in the Atlantic. The enthusiasm of the unemotional British almost reached the point of frenzy.

Most of the people were thoroughly mixed up between *Endeavour I.* and *Endeavour II.*, and thought it was the boat which had been beaten by three or four miles in each race against the *Ranger* in the contest for the America Cup.

This added to the general emotion, because the English love a loser, and never had a yacht lost before by such fabulous lengths.

Then, of course, the Englishman loves the sea. He regards the Atlantic much the same as his back garden and the Channel as his front lawn.

So getting all mixed up, as the English do when they let go of their emotions, they felt that the *Endeavour*, by beating the Atlantic Ocean, had somehow shown the Vanderbilts up in their true light.

The Japs were bombarding Shanghai; Hitler and Mussolini were goosestepping all over Germany; submarines were rearing their nasty necks in the Mediterranean—but retired colonels were gazing starry-eyed into their port in Pall Mall and ejaculating: "Eighteen days! By gad, sir! Lost for eighteen days and then turned up. Stout fellas, by gad! Stout fellas!"

If the *Endeavour I.*—which, of course, raced in 1934—had not turned up for another week, the skipper would probably have been given a knighthood.

Let it not be imagined that the author of this letter did not share the national frenzy. The only difference was that his admiration was tinged with envy.

Eighteen days out of touch with the world!

Think of it. No newspapers, no radio, no telegrams, no rumours, no Cabinet meetings, no stock reports, no movies—nothing but the sky and the wind and the lonely waste of waters. How marvellous!

I called a friend on the telephone the other morning and suggested lunch. "No, old boy," he said. "I have just read the newspapers through, and I'm going to stay in bed and wait peacefully for the end."

The literal truth is that the world is in such an upheaval that one is offered only two alternatives—that of the Germans in July, 1914, who regarded the situation as serious but not desperate; or the Austrians, who regarded it as desperate but not serious.

This Chinese business is so vast, so immeasurable in its potentialities that momentarily it dwarfs the menace of Europe. And perhaps it means more to you and to me than to people over here, because Canada, too, has an ocean on the West that is almost like her garden.

The Pacific. How events are mocking that lovely name! How red the sun that rises in the East!

My wife tells me that she can never read a book which starts off by mentioning the Elector of Hanover. There are many people whose minds give way the moment a Chinese name of a person or a province is mentioned. To them, all Chinese words sound alike, just as all Chinamen look exactly the same.

Nevertheless, I suggest that we sit down together and study the fascinating story of China. The past is the parent of the future, and unless we look back beyond the hills we cannot tell what waits on the plains ahead.

I do not propose to go back to the ancient centuries when China had an advanced civilisation and the Westerners were barbarians. After all, there are moments when one believes that the situation has not altered greatly with the passing of time.

For the immediate two centuries up to the year 1910,

the system of government in China was extremely interesting. It consisted of an Emperor in Peking whose duty it was to intercede with God for his people. Having done that, he farmed out the government of the various provinces to viceroys. The arrangements between the Emperor and these gentlemen were simplicity itself. The first was that the provincial contribution to the revenue should be dispatched regularly and promptly to the Emperor. The other was that on no account should news of any trouble in the provinces be allowed to reach royal ears.

Even that is not so ancient as it seems. There have been times in the government of Canada when it would appear that the Chinese system was being tried out.

Foreign observers studying China became the victims of a deceptive slogan. Somebody, probably an obscure journalist, coined the phrase, "the Unchanging East." That phrase caused a lot of trouble. Western civilisation, with its ingenuity and its commercial rapacity, thought that at last a great section of the world had been discovered where nothing ever happened.

They were wrong. The system of the Emperor and his viceroys inevitably had to break down. It bred an official class so arrogant and so corrupt that it could not go on forever. While the artistic and intellectual life of China developed to an astonishingly high degree, her people sank lower and lower in the responsible qualities of citizenship.

Since banishment, torture or decapitation were the rewards for any one who dared to speak for the constitutional rights of the people, it is small wonder that, with the exception of a few idealists, the people of China came to live solely for themselves, their families and their clans. Patriotism and the dignity of citizenship were lost beyond the horizon.

But destiny wearies of all evil things in time. In

1912 came the revolution. The dynasties fell and a republic emerged.

Unfortunately, as in the cases of Russia, France and Germany, the revolution was strong enough to give birth to a republic but not to suckle it.

All revolutions are strangely alike. There comes the impact and the overthrow. As if afraid of its own violence, it then produces the man of moderation who tries to build constitutionalism before the flames are out. As in Russia, as in Germany, as in France, so with China. The moderates failed and the Strong Man appeared.

The name of this gentleman was Yuan Shih-kai. Like Hitler and Mussolini, he established a dictatorship. Then, like Napoleon, he conceived the plan of establishing a new dynasty with himself as the first of the line. He launched a campaign for this purpose and died in the process.

Note once more the familiar sequence of events. After the first success of a revolution, there almost always emerges a dictator who becomes the enemy of that revolution. And the nation over which he rules finds itself faced with a despot that has no successor.

Following the worst monarch there is always some one to carry on; but after the death of a dictator, there is nearly always chaos. Under the Chinese Republic, the army was united. In the disorder that followed the death of Yuan Shih-kai, the army broke up into independent sections commanded by so-called war lords.

The result was a series of misnamed "civil wars." They were, of course, no such thing. The people had nothing to do with them. They were merely the struggles of gangsters, posing as national leaders, which provided a rich harvest for the profiteer, the armament agent, the opportunist and the murderer.

Yet again destiny grew weary of these pranks, and after a few of the more savage war lords had been killed a fresh opportunity arose for the enlightened leaders of

China. The new man of power was General Kai-shek with his brilliant American-educated wife, the youngest of the three famous Soong sisters. The teachings of such men as Sun Yat-sen had not fallen on barren ground.

Unfortunately a nation cannot live unto itself alone. Events in China were having their repercussions in Japan.

I have not space here to deal with the changing character of the Japanese nation. She was once chivalrous and a loyal ally to Great Britain. Her services to us in the War were of the highest strategical importance. As a race her people are fond of beauty, and their literature bespeaks a genuine idealism. Unfortunately, Japan watched the exploitation of the passive provinces of China by the Western powers. She learned the game quickly. The quality of cunning entered the souls of her statesmen.

When the Treaty of Versailles was signed, one of the Japanese ministers said to his Cabinet: "The blunders of that treaty will keep Europe confined to Europe for twenty years. That means that we have twenty years to consolidate our domination of Asia."

Manchuria was a test case. China, as a member of the League, held out her hands to the Western world. The League faltered and evaded the issue.

It is easy to condemn that action now, but there was only one member of the League which could have brought force to bear upon Japan and that was Great Britain. At any rate, rightly or wrongly, the gangsters got away with their bluff. The Chinese pleaded: "This Manchuria attack is only a beginning. We are not cowardly, but our country has been so weakened by the centuries that we are helpless. One word from the Western nations, one word from the countries that signed the Nine Power Pact guaranteeing our territorial integrity, would have stopped Japan."

Europe was silent. The first of the great humiliations



to the League was complete. Japan became a vast arsenal preparing for the ultimate conquest of China.

The Japanese had reckoned, however, without General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. With superhuman effort they were creating a new China, building highways where paths had been before, erecting schools, launching a "New Life" movement and a people's "Economic Reconstruction" movement, preparing a way for the Chinese to choose their rulers by constitutional methods, visiting all parts of the country to encourage the officials and people in the cause of unification.

They were opposed by tradition, by Communist agitators, by disgruntled grafters and careerists—but nothing could stop the forward sweep set loose by the Nanking Government.

The Japanese became alarmed. Something had gone wrong with their time-table. The spectacle of a united China haunted the dreams of the militarists. They had planned the conquest of China for 1940. With the new order of things, that might be too late. The whole plan had to be advanced.

A few weeks ago in America a distinguished and learned citizen of the United States showed me a letter from one of the leaders of the Nanking Government. It was dated a year ago, and its contents are both historic and prophetic. He wrote:

"It is a race with time; a battle between our hopes for unification and the bribery of the Japanese, who are stirring up trouble everywhere, even giving money to the Communists to encourage them to rise either against us at Nanking or against the Japanese themselves. They do not care what cry is raised, as long as China is dis-united and they can claim that the lives of their nationals are not safe.

"Japan wants China to consist of autonomous states, with herself as dictator and central intriguer. She will

go to any limits to prevent the unification of China. That is why I think she will make war very soon because of the progress we have been making."

When this appears many things may have happened in the East, but even writing at this moment when the Japanese forces are desperately attacking, I think four or five important facts stand out:

1. It is quite possible that Japan in her attempt to dismember China has brought about the unification so much desired by Chinese leaders and so much dreaded by Japan.

2. More than any other factor, it has weakened America's out-of-date adherence to the policy of isolation. There is every sign that the United States is at last going to take her place among the civilised powers of the world with a full sense of her international responsibilities.

3. The mass murder of women and children has aroused the whole of Europe to the horror of modern warfare. The conscience of Europe is at last awake.

No longer can one part of the world dissociate itself from the other. The very term, "The Far East," is out-of-date. Science has annihilated distance and ended forever the possibility of isolation. We are seeing great things pass before our eyes. May the souls and minds of the leaders of men rise to their responsibilities at this hour.

## *Japan Puts Her Case*

I WAS sitting in the lounge of the Savoy Hotel before lunch with an American publisher. He was an intelligent man, one of the minority of world citizens who inhabit the Free and United States of America.

He was worried. So was I. The cynic might observe that when a writer and publisher are seen together, it is only the publisher who should look worried. In this case, however, our discussion was not of manuscripts or future novels but of the Far East.

"Has Japan gone mad?" he asked, over and over again.

"Perhaps the whole world has gone mad," I answered.

We tried to talk of other and lighter things, such as literature, the London climate, Hitler, winter sports and Mussolini. It was no use. Japan. Japan. Japan. The word followed us as the eyes of the murdered Nancy haunted Bill Sykes.

A friend of mine passed. "Have you taken the moth balls out of your uniform?" he asked.

A young Oxford Grouper who has wrestled for my soul more than once came over and asked if I knew any inside facts about the Far Eastern situation. When I shook my head, he muttered: "I'd give anything to have a crack at those devils."

An interesting commentary on the Group. . . . But then Shaw first created the muscular Christian who was always breaking the necks of infidels who would not see the light.

Japan. Japan. Japan.

A waiter came up to us. With that superb detachment of the Italian waiter from all mundane affairs, he bowed to me. "The Japanese Embassy on the telephone for you, sir."

He would have used exactly the same voice and manners if it had been a blonde, an inspector of police, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. Nevertheless the announcement was not without an element of melodrama, and I went to the telephone box with considerable interest.

It was the ambassador's English secretary. Would I honour His Excellency by dining with him on Thursday evening to meet Viscount Ishii, the unofficial Japanese ambassador to Europe? His Excellency had such charming memories of our last meeting, and as this was to be a small private dinner it would give him such intense pleasure . . .

As the Japanese saying has it—when you bow, see that you bow low. At any rate I answered that Thursday evening would witness the honour and happiness of finding His Excellency, Mr. Shigeru Yoshida, Viscount Ishii, and myself, under one roof.

When I told the publisher, he shook his head. "I'd be damned if I would go," he said.

Later on, at the House of Commons, a friend of mine came up. "I hear you have been asked to dine with the Japanese ambassador on Thursday night," he said. "I have refused to go. So has—and—. You are letting the side down if you accept."

For half an hour we discussed the matter, but his arguments did not impress me and I told him so. We were not at war with Japan. Viscount Ishii was once Foreign Minister of that country, and wished to put its case to a selected few of us in London. That case might be bad, it might be ludicrous, but Viscount Ishii had a right to make it. As for the pleasure of snubbing the Japanese ambassador, that seemed a singularly immature gesture.

"You will get in trouble with your constituents if they hear about it," he said as a final warning.

"I shall publish the fact in my local papers," I

answered, "so that they will certainly hear about it."

That was the atmosphere of London when, on Thursday night, I drove to the Japanese embassy. It was going to be interesting to see who would be there.

When we sat down in the huge dining-room of the Japanese embassy in Grosvenor Square this was the personnel:

Viscount Ishii,  
The Japanese ambassador,  
Four young Japanese diplomats,  
Six British M.P.'s,  
A former British ambassador in the Far East.

The setting was not without drama or incongruity. On the walls were three large paintings. Of warriors? Of emperors? Of victories? Not at all. All three were of flowers.

Mr. Shigeru Yoshida, the Japanese ambassador, and the eighty-one-year-old Viscount Ishii smiled frequently but rather sadly. On the other hand, the younger diplomats were full of vivacity and charm. One of them could easily become a rage on the films with his good looks and his graciousness.

The sextet from the House of Commons was grim and uncompromising. We knew that we were going to be subjected to propaganda, and our minds were drawn up for defence like the British squares at Waterloo.

The former British ambassador looked on, half amused, half curious. He understood the Oriental mentality and the British—the two most astute mentalities in the world.

When the dinner was over, we lit our cigars and the game began. I looked around with a keen interest. The British all seemed so huge and imperturbable in comparison with the little Japs interspersed among them.

Yet one man stood out above all the others—the old veteran, Viscount Ishii. A great man, this octogenarian statesman. Former Foreign Minister, former ambassador to Washington, former ambassador to France, now a wandering and unofficial ambassador of good will in a world of concentrated ill will toward his country.

I intend that the readers of *Maclean's* shall hear his case just as it was put to us. We did not interrupt him as he spoke in slow but excellent English. So, if you will join our table we shall now listen to the apologist for the Orient:

“We were very proud in Japan to be the ally of Great Britain. Every boy, as soon as he was old enough, was taught to believe that the English nation was his friend. That made him proud and happy. When the war of 1914 occurred, you did not ask us to come to Europe, but we did what you wished and cleared the Pacific of any German menace. Then, in 1921, you decided that you were finished with the Alliance. America asked you to break our partnership, and Canada added a decisive voice. Canada and America were nations on the Pacific. Once more we found ourselves alone in the East, our great friend wanting us no more.

“Yet we did not change toward you. We still said, ‘Britain is our friend, even if not our ally.’ And that is true to-day, although the situation is so difficult.

“But soon we found that the Western world did not want our goods or our people. Japan, they said, must stay in the East. We had commercial treaties with China, but China always breaks treaties. No nation can be so distrusted as China when she signs a solemn agreement.

“China, seeing that we were no longer an ally of Britain, began to boycott our goods and endanger the lives of our people. We had to take over Manchukuo to safeguard ourselves. The harsh opinions of Britain hurt us very deeply, but since the West did not want us we had to make our lives safe in the East.

"But China would not be friends. We had our rights by the Treaty of Peking, the same as the other Powers, and we sent a small army to North China to protect our people and our business. China had an immense army, perhaps a million and a half. The Chinese officers said that the Japanese army was not good, that we had not fought a real war since Russia.

"One day they attacked our soldiers, who were exercising, as was their right. So surprised were we that we sent an officer to inquire, and the Chinese fired again. So the fighting began. We hoped to settle it soon in the North, but China began fighting at Shanghai so as to involve us with the Powers.

"We have no territorial designs in China. We shall respect the rights of other Powers, although China intends to get rid of every foreign concession, in spite of the fact that it is foreign money that has built up her wealth.

"All we desire is peace in China and the safety of our trade and our people. We still love the British, although your newspapers have been so severe that there have been anti-British outbursts in Tokyo. The Japanese cannot understand why the British press sees only the side of China, the wrecker of treaties."

That, in substance, was the case made by Viscount Ishii. It was listened to with respect.

When it was over, we put our case. Each of us contributed to the discussion, but so completely were we in accord that it is not necessary to differentiate between one speaker and another. Therefore, just as I have asked you to hear the case for Japan as presented by its unofficial spokesman, I now ask you to listen to the British case as it was heard by the six Japanese present:

"Your Excellency, we are very grateful for your exposition. If we are unable to accept all that you say in its entirety, that does not lessen our gratitude to you for having put it to us. We recognise that you yourself have

nothing but good will toward the British people, and we thank both you and His Excellency, the ambassador, for this opportunity to meet around this table.

"Your description of the life and death of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is perfectly accurate. That Alliance was invaluable to us. During its existence the Pacific was a safety zone for British interests, and we never had cause to complain of your country as a partner.

"Whether or not that Alliance should have been ended, is a very serious question. You will no doubt remember that after the War there was an irresistible movement in Britain to cement the understanding of the English-speaking nations. To please America we accepted an impossible war-debt settlement, we extended the three-mile limit to twelve miles to assist their prohibition law, we made Southern Ireland into a Free State to soothe the feelings of Irish-Americans, and finally we parted company with our good friend and ally, Japan. It is only fair to say, Your Excellency, that we might not have done so if the pressure from Canada had not been enormous and finally decisive.

"Many of us had grave doubts at the time and expressed them. However, the Anglo-American ideal won out. Also, you must remember that we hoped that the League of Nations would see the end of all alliances.

"Therefore, we take no issue with you on these points. We think, however, Your Excellency, that you might have given us a little more history of your country than that which deals only with Anglo-Japanese relations. It was not merely for poetry that China in ancient days gave your island the name Ji-Pan, meaning the source of the sun. There have been many signs that your people not only believe that they are the children of the Sun, but that they have a special mission to dominate the Orient.

"That feeling was given an immense impetus by your defeat of Russia in 1904, although we think you will not



deny that another few weeks would have seen your troops too exhausted to fight on."

(Viscount Ishii nodded assent. I wanted to remind him that the Japanese attacked the Russian Fleet before the declaration of war, and to inquire if this was a permanent Japanese custom. However, I contented myself with saying it to the Japanese diplomat on my right.)

The Japanese ambassador interrupted to suggest that we should circulate the port, and we then went on with our case.

"You will agree, Your Excellency, that the Treaty of Versailles, after the War, gave Japan the prizes of contest without the sacrifices. Europe was exhausted, a giant ruined by its own folly, if you like. The sun was rising in the East, in more senses than one. Modern machinery from Britain had created a vast textile industry in Japan. You had the latest methods, no weight of dead capital, and the newest equipment generally. It is no use our denouncing Japanese competition merely on the grounds of cheap labour. There is no question that your industries, generally, are efficient, even if you have copied everything from the Western world."

Viscount Ishii smiled.

"For 250 years," he said, "we tried to isolate ourselves from the whole world. We even kept our ships so small that they could not go beyond a certain range. After all, it was Britain, America and France that insisted upon our abandoning that isolation. You cannot blame us if we learned from our teachers."

We admitted his point, and said that so far as it had gone our argument was not intended in any sense of criticism.

"You will admit, however," we went on, "that with the coming of industrialisation, the surface standards of Japanese life became changed. Your young ladies, for example, took to dressing like Westerners and actually met their fiancés before betrothal."

"That is true," said the ambassador, "but they revert to traditional dress when they marry."

The four Japanese diplomats smiled broadly. The British case was much more mild than they had expected. They did not, however, know what was coming.

"We have long admired the courtly manners of your country, Your Excellency," we continued. "Your people have a delicate and pervading sense of beauty which made it a land of much charm for those fortunate enough to visit Japan, but I think you will admit that perhaps the greatest change in the new Japan was that which took place in your army. It is well known that your Government became greatly worried by the growth of secret societies. The gospel of the mailed fist was preached behind closed doors. In fact, to put it bluntly, a very unpleasant development began to take place. A new Japanese army was arising, consisting of men of poor education, of violent egotism, and a fanatical belief in their own invincibility. We have noted with great sorrow how the soldiers have become the masters of your politicians.

"As time went on they either dominated your Government by the appointment of ministers to suit themselves, or they got rid of ministers of whom they did not approve by the simple method of assassination."

(I looked at the face of the Japanese ambassador. It had the mask of a fixed smile, but I was wondering if his thoughts had not gone back to an incident not long ago in Tokyo when his father-in-law, Count Makino, just managed to escape death through the efforts of his wife who was wounded by the would-be assassins. Mr. Shigeru Yoshida, like Viscount Ishii, is a Liberal and a man of good will toward men. There are more sufferers from Japanese violence than the unfortunate Chinese on the Yangtze.)

"In other words, Your Excellency, we believe that the army is the master of your country, and that its aims are

dangerous, its officers irresponsible, and its menace to the world very great. You have given your version of what started this trouble in North China. You will not object if in turn we give you ours, based upon the reports of men on the spot, and whose integrity we cannot doubt.

"Your army in North China was there by treaty rights and existed for the ostensible purpose of protecting Japanese interests and Japanese lives. Unfortunately, it extended its activities far beyond those legitimate purposes. It became a cloak for the smuggling of Japanese goods, which reached such a point that it was demoralising the whole economic structure of the country. Further than that, your soldiers offered such persistent affront to the Chinese that even the almost inexhaustible patience of that country could stand it no longer. We agree that the Chinese fired first and without warning. Our belief is that it was only a matter of time when that had to happen, and that it was the desire of your army that it should be so. We are not impervious to the fact that there is in Japan a strong but submerged liberalism, represented by yourself and by our host. Our hope is that the very violence and the monstrous blunders of your army may hasten the day when the true Japan will speak again. If that time comes, you will find Britain ready to resume its ancient friendship with your country. Unless that comes, we can see nothing but the gravest developments between Japan and Britain."

The situation is so grave that one can only hope that its very menace may bring a sense of caution to the madmen who are dominating Japan to-day.

## *If America Paid*

IT IS one of the inevitabilities of a Canadian entering public life in England that he will be constantly informed that he is an interpreter between America and Britain. It goes farther than that. Canada herself is given the same rôle of interpreter between her neighbour and the mother country.

One would almost think that the two countries spoke languages unintelligible to each other, and that the Canadians alone held the secret of both.

Moreover, our duties as an interpreter are clearly defined. We must inform the United States that the English are simple, sincere, democratic, kindly, honest and affable ; on the other hand, we are to tell the English (and the Welsh and the Scots) that the Americans are simple, sincere, democratic, kindly, honest and affable.

Personally, I am not enthusiastic about this sort of thing. It is like these confounded banquets which a politician must attend, where the chairman, the guest of honour and the honorary secretary are toasted in such fulsome terms that one takes a low view of all three of them out of a natural cussedness.

What is really needed between the United States of America and Britain is less flattery and more truth. The question of whether the American likes the Englishman or the Englishman the American is unimportant. The world situation is too intense, too urgent, for these schoolgirl pleasantries.

The real question is this—is America ready to take her place beside Britain in a determination to force peace upon a harassed and muddle-headed world?

Perhaps I have the answer before me which re-

presents a large volume of opinion in America. It is a sardonic book which, I am told, is sweeping the U.S.A. and is called, "England Expects Every American to do His Duty."

Farther than that, I can hear the voice of the Middle West repeating over and over again: "If Britain wants to do business with the U.S.A., why doesn't she first pay us the money she owes?"

What is the reply to those two slogans? To me it is simple. If I could find some means of addressing the whole of the American people, I would make this statement:

*"The issue of peace or war in the world depends whether America—before it is too late—pays something of her debt to Britain."*

There would be murmurs that I was referring to the Confederate States that have owed debts to England which by now would amount to fabulous sums. But I would soon dispel that.

"I am not referring to mere tradesmen's debts on either side," I would reply, "but to a debt on your part that is so vast that it could not be computed in terms of money."

Such a speech from a British Member of Parliament would of course be impossible. What is more, in my case it would upset all the smug conventions of Canadians interpreting the two nations to each other. Therefore, I would be content merely to have aroused some curiosity as well as resentment. Then I would go to Washington and use the good offices of my friend, Mr. Cordell Hull, to try to secure an audience with the President.

One of the greatest dramas of all time is taking place in Washington at this hour. On the result of that struggle between the progressive and retrogressive elements of the Republic may well depend not only the future of the U.S.A. but of Western civilisation itself.

President Roosevelt and Mr. Cordell Hull have gone far toward pointing the way.

With a courage which is wholly admirable, they have declared that the time has come for America to abandon isolation and take her place beside the democracies of the world in opposition to the autocracies.

Translated into simpler terms, the President and his Foreign Minister contend that the moment has arrived for America and Britain to form an unsigned but actual alliance to develop a common military and economic policy, to use the combined strength of the two nations not as a tyrant but as a giant—against the forces of world disruption.

Opposing them they have the powerful parrot cry: "Watch out for Britain. She wants us to pick her chestnuts out of the fire for her."

That cry is common in the United States. And in a nation where the Presidential elections have been won and lost on a slogan, the political menace of "picking Britain's chestnuts out of the fire" cannot be discounted.

The ordinary American is not a world citizen. He is sentimental, kindly, idealistic, but clothed in a vast and self-satisfied ignorance about the history of every country, including his own.

He would be hurt and sincerely astonished to learn that his beloved country owes Great Britain that which could not be estimated in terms of all the wealth in the world.

I believe that if he were told of it, he would be ready and anxious to repay.

Therefore, I would endeavour to achieve a miracle at Washington. It would probably be madness even to think of such a thing, but supposing the incredible happened and the impossible occurred. Supposing, as a result of our conversation, President Roosevelt went to the microphone and made a speech somewhat along these lines:

"My friends, before I start my address to-night I want to tell you a little story. Many years ago this country was at war with Spain in the Pacific.

"In pursuance of our belligerent rights we had announced a blockade of Manila Harbour by our Fleet. Now, it happened that Admiral Chichester, of the British Navy, was in the neighbourhood with a number of ships.

"Then a strong section of the German Fleet turned up. Germany had her own ideas about the Pacific being taken out of European hands, and the German admiral sent word to the British admiral asking what he would do if the Germans decided to force the blockade.

"He expected—or, at any rate, hoped—that the British would remain neutral. Admiral Chichester's reply was: 'America's admiral knows what my ships will do.'

"Whereupon the British took up a position between the Germans and ourselves. Their bluff having been called, the German ships went back home.

"Many of you have been taught to look upon Britain as our enemy. It is true we fought her for our existence as a Republic.

"Yet I say to you that, next to the character and the strength of our people, the greatest contribution to the happiness and prosperity of the U.S.A. has been made by the unfailing friendliness and assistance of Great Britain.

"When our Civil War left us exhausted, British capital poured in by endless millions to assist in building up the nation we know to-day.

"Controlling as she did a quarter of the earth's surface, Britain was powerful enough to put a wall about her Empire and shut out all other nations. Instead, she refused to do so, and under a policy of Free Trade, made her own wealth a source of wealth to all.

"We have traded and still trade in every British port, secure in the honour of British commercial standards and in the protection of the British Fleet.

"When China ceded part of a swamp called Shanghai to Britain and it was transformed by British genius and British capital into the great commercial and financial metropolis of the Far East, it was the beginning of our own immense expansion of trade with China.

"To-day, with half her investments, we do twice the trade that Britain does with China.

"In the Great War, the forces of militant autocracy challenged the forces of democracy and demanded that they stand aside. For many reasons, some noble and others ignoble, we refused to play our part, while the young men of France and Britain held the last outposts of civilisation.

"Once more the British Fleet kept intact the world that was necessary to American prosperity and American happiness. We came in eventually, but though we could not repay Britain's debt, we demanded that she should guarantee the repayment of our dollars loaned to the Allies. The dollar had become more sacred than human life.

"When the war was over our President asked for—nay, he demanded!—a League of Nations in the name of civilisation, and Britain agreed to pool her sovereignty with the little nations of the world. America then abandoned her own plan and Britain took on the task of administering it instead. We refused to guarantee the integrity of France, so Britain signed beneath the place where our signature should have been.

"Then drunk with gold and an ever-rising prosperity, we raised our tariffs sky-high and tried to be the world's creditor, the world's seller, and never the world's buyer. Politically and financially, we did our best to create the Europe of to-day and make inevitable the chaos which has come. And not only in Europe.

"We asked Britain to abandon her alliance with Japan and offered nothing in return. Once more Britain acceded to our requests, believing that in the end the



communion of the English-speaking peoples would justify any sacrifices.

"Shortly afterward the British Government proposed a complete cancellation of all war debts. Britain was owed twice as much by her debtors as she owed to us. We refused, and thus denied to the world that pacific and constructive generosity which the British foresaw as the surest means of preventing European disruption.

"When the war debts had become unworkable and were clogging the whole economic system of the world, the United States Government proposed a truce in all payments not only of debts but reparations. The British Government suspended reparations due to her and then virtually cancelled them. Britain made this gesture to the beaten enemy countries to give them a chance to recover. We still claim Britain's debt to us, although it was largely incurred by her guarantee of loans which were made to the Allies.

"Turn where you will in the history of our two countries, whether it is the granting of territory to us in North America to make our economic life more workable, whether in the fairness of her attitude to us in commerce, or whether it is as an ally in times of international stress, we find ourselves in debt to Great Britain.

"For the last five years, British honour and British patience have kept the decencies of civilisation from going down to the tyrant's onslaught.

"Now that she is threatened on two fronts, we must ask ourselves if Britain's fate is no concern of ours.

"My friends, if we refuse now to take our stand openly and unreservedly beside Great Britain, if we refuse to pay anything of our overwhelming debt, then history and destiny alike will rend this country, and we shall stand condemned for all time by those who follow us."

In my opinion there is not a sentence in that speech which would not pass the closest scrutiny of history.

At the same time, it would be neither wise nor accurate to argue that the debt is only on one side.

For many decades the United States has maintained a policy of peace which has kept the two American continents free from external attack.

Further than that, America has been a good neighbour to Canada, and we who belong to the Dominion would be ungrateful to a degree if we did not acknowledge the strong measure of military security which her contiguity has provided.

And though America came late into the Great War—tragically late—the arrival of her troops was like the transfusion of blood to the exhausted veins of a man at death's door.

I would not belittle our debt to America either material or spiritual, but neither can we belittle America's debt to Britain.

America and Britain face a dreadful menace in the Far East. Japan goes on from outrage to outrage in the belief that America will not take her stand with Britain. So does Mussolini. So, to a lesser extent, does Hitler.

Yet America and Britain could restore peace to the Far East without firing a gun. Britain and France together could clear the Mediterranean of every Italian ship in twenty-four hours, and lock the German Navy in the Baltic.

Does America, in spite of Roosevelt's warnings, still believe that she can live on her own flesh and keep the evils of the world outside her borders?

The most half-witted Babbitt in the smallest town in Illinois knows that such a policy is impossible. Then is America still willing to live and trade and prosper because Britain makes it possible for her so to do? Or, conversely, is she willing to see all that go rather than support Britain?

I believe that the Americans would like to know those truths. The idealism of America is not a myth. There is a passion for freedom inherent in American citizenship that is wholly admirable.

They fought the mother country to establish that freedom. They fought their Civil War on the slogan that you can't have half a nation slave and half free. They came into the Great War because freedom had its back to the wall in Europe.

It would not be just to assume that self-interest is the only factor in American development. The tragedy of the great Republic is not its soul but its lack of vision, its inability to realise that no nation can guard itself against the destiny of humanity at large.

I wish President Roosevelt would make some such speech as I have indicated. Failing that, let us hope that some of the copies of this article which cross the border may start a little trail of enlightenment that will throw some illumination upon the dark spots of American misunderstanding.

## *Eden Goes*

IN MORE WAYS than one there are many points of similarity between the abdication crisis and the resignation crisis of Anthony Eden. Both involved young men whose popularity had reached fantastic levels. In each case the public was unaware of any impending trouble. King Edward was opposed by sixty-eight year old Stanley Baldwin, and Eden by sixty-seven year old Neville Chamberlain. Both Eden and King Edward had the benefit of Winston Churchill's close advice before taking the final decision, and in each case Churchill attacked the Government and showed his willingness to form an alternative administration. Winston Churchill remains the most brilliant failure of political history—a man who could not pick a winner with only one horse in the race.

Similarity in the two upheavals does not end there. The British public was stunned by the revelation that their beloved King had put a woman before the throne. However, grief and bitter disillusion kept the situation in hand. In the Eden affair there was no such sobering influences. The public saw in their handsome Foreign Secretary a man who at last had stood up to dictators and been dismissed by a timid Prime Minister.

The circumstantial evidence was so damning.

On that fateful Sunday, Hitler had shrieked his three-hour speech to the Reichstag, in which he had taunted democracy, mocked Eden. Hitler spoke at noon. Eden's resignation was announced that night. Is there a jury in existence that would not have brought in a verdict that Hitler had dismissed our Foreign Secretary?

The storm broke over Britain with a fury that was unbelievable. Newsreels were rushed to cinemas, and

every appearance of Chamberlain was booed and hissed. Like every other M.P., I was flooded with telegrams and messages from my constituents ordering me to support Eden. Rumours came that a hundred Government supporters in Parliament were going to break away from the Premier. My own response was to send a telegram to Chamberlain pledging my unconditional support, and, on instructions of Lord Kemsley, I also sent word to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons pledging the powerful group of Allied Newspapers in support.

Parliament was surrounded by dense crowds as we made our way there to hear Eden and Chamberlain make their statements. If war had been declared that day against Italy or Germany, we would have seen the same scenes as were witnessed in 1914.

Eden's resignation had broken at last the patience which Britain had shown so long towards the insults and exasperations of the dictators. When Mac wrote that letter to me from Alberta a few weeks ago, he was putting into words the submerged feelings of a large section of the public over here.

The House of Commons was electric with excitement. Every inch of space was occupied. The foreign ambassadors all were there, and I saw in the gallery the fine features of the Kaiser's grandson.

At 3.45 p.m., the same hour at which Baldwin had announced the abdication of Edward VIII., Eden swung into the House with his broad shoulders, slim graceful figure, his shadowed and rather pathetic eyes, and an expression of quiet determination. The Socialists and Liberals burst into frenzied cheering. The Government ranks were ominously quiet as he made his way to the same corner seat where Sir Samuel Hoare, the man who had been dismissed to make room for Eden, had delivered his defiant apology over Abyssinia.

Although we were silent, it was impossible not to

feel a great warmth for the young ex-Minister who had tried so hard and endured so much, but who had at last thrown in his hand—a man who had gripped the imagination of the entire world and roused the maternal instinct in a hundred million women. Fifteen minutes later, Eden rose to make a statement. Once more the Opposition cheered to the echo, and Chamberlain, from the front bench, sat and stared into space.

But Eden is not a fool. He knew that he could have roused his new-found friends to hysteria by a few rousing phrases. He knew that he could have set a nation alight by a jingoistic attack against dictators. Instead, he spoke quietly, modestly, and went no further than to say that, while he was in favour of conversations with Italy, he demanded proof of Italian honesty first. Nor would he make peace with any nation at the point of a threat.

Except for that ending it was almost a dull speech, a speech that left the sensation-hungry mobs unappeased.

Then Chamberlain rose. And where I had felt sympathy for Eden, I experienced an emotion too deep for words as I watched my leader, son of the great Joe. The man who had brought the nation's finances from the disaster of 1931 to the pinnacle of to-day, the Premier on the verge of seventy who has no respite, day after day, month after month, and who asks for no pity. He, too, made no play to the gallery. Such is the standard of British public life that even in this moment of furious controversy, with the whole world looking on, both men were determined to do nothing that would lower the prestige of Parliament.

Neither uttered a single word of recrimination toward the other. The young man had paid tribute to Chamberlain's leadership, and older man now paid tribute to Eden's great services. Whoever won, they wanted to make sure that Parliamentary dignity did not lose. Relentlessly, fairly, calmly, Chamberlain recounted the

circumstances of the resignation crisis. They had agreed in principle about conversing with Italy, but not in method. In the end, as head of the Government, he had insisted upon his way, but he did not consider the differences great enough to justify Eden's resignation.

Twice Chamberlain spoke that day, once as acting Foreign Secretary, and once as Prime Minister. The next day, facing a vote of censure, he spoke for a third time. Now he dropped all restraint, and painted such a picture of his own responsibility as to silence his enemies and his friends alike.

"Some day," he said, "I may have to take the decision of sending this nation into war. If that moment comes, I want to be able to answer to my own conscience that I did everything I could to prevent it. More than that, I am determined that I shall do what lies in my power so that my successor may not have to take that awful decision. I may fail in what I am doing, but I must try. There is such a thing as a nation being so great that it can afford to do what in a lesser nation might seem like timidity."

Cheers swept the House. The crowds outside were shouting for Eden, and our cheers seemed as if they would break through the stone walls and answer the cinema hysteria of the mobs outside. For fully a minute Mr. Chamberlain sat and did not seem to hear the uproar. Then, startled, he looked around to his followers behind him. His face broke into a smile, half-shy, half-happy. Startled in our turn by this exhibition of human emotion, we let out such a roar as was seldom heard before in the precincts of Westminster.

Now, what is the true story behind the whole affair? To me it is quite simple. Eden was brought down by three things—his youth, his blind adherence to the League of Nations after it had ceased to function, and his pride.

Readers of these letters had some warning of coming events, for in my letter on the cost of public service, I hinted openly that Mr. Eden's cold might get worse, and

that he would have to give up and take a rest. Eden disdained that course, but he could not defeat the forces, both personal and impersonal, that were lined up against him. Perhaps he could have done so had he been older and possessed a deeper philosophy. As it was, his patience broke, and fierce resentment clogged the clear stream of his judgment.

Take the situation within the Cabinet itself. Two former Foreign Secretaries sat at the same table, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare. Each of them had fallen because of the failure of the League to be made into a reality. Eden had risen to power on their ashes, because in the eyes of the world he was the very spirit of Geneva.

When Eden was forced to abandon Sanctions against Italy, it was the end of the League as a vital factor until such time as a new League could be created, including Italy, Germany and America. Logically, Eden should have gone when he abandoned Sanctions. Instead, he remained in office, and it need not be doubted that the influence of Sir Samuel Hoare at least was entirely on the side of a policy that would end Geneva humbug and get down to realities with the dictator states.

Naturally, such a policy must have seemed to Eden to be directed against him. Externally, there were two dictators. We must remember the Abyssinian affair, that Italy saw herself menaced by the might of Britain plus the member states of the League. To Italians, Eden was the implacable enemy of Italy and not a proper person to discuss terms of friendship. Then there was Hitler. In his eyes, Eden was wedded to an Anglo-French alliance, with the League in the background directed against Germany. It was acknowledgment of this hostility that made Chamberlain send Lord Halifax to Germany some months ago to discuss Anglo-German differences.

That both humiliated and infuriated Eden. He saw himself trying to restrain the mad dogs of Europe while



his own Government weakened his position by sending another man to see Hitler. Angrily Eden offered his resignation. Patiently, Chamberlain persuaded him to withdraw it. But nerves were being frayed. Sir Robert Vansittart, permanent head of the Foreign Office, came into conflict with Eden. This was odd, because both were pro-French. But when nerves take charge, logic flies out of the window. Vansittart was "promoted" to be foreign adviser to the Cabinet. Eden had won that round. But his humiliations were not yet over. Chamberlain, who was determined on his policy of appeasing Europe, virtually announced he would personally direct foreign policy in conjunction with Eden. The younger man did his best, but the pride and arrogance of Foreign Office officials were deeply hurt.

"You will be known," they said to Eden, "as the Secretary who allowed the Foreign Office to be made a department of No. 10 Downing Street."

Eden bit his lip, but hung on. He knew his following in the country. He knew he was the one Minister who could precipitate a crisis by resigning, but he did not want to quit with his task unfinished.

Then came the final clash. Yet it was over nothing more than the demand of Eden that Italy must show good faith by carrying out broken pledges already in existence as a prelude to general conversation.

"Europe cannot wait for this purifying period," said Chamberlain. "Besides, what is a gesture of honesty worth if a man intends to be dishonest later on? Let us get down to business."

At that stage Churchill appeared through the trap-door like a wicked demon. He was seen constantly with Eden, whispering, whispering, whispering.

"I insist upon my way," said Eden to the Premier.

Chamberlain called the Cabinet together on a Saturday—an almost unprecedented action in a country where Saturday is held sacred.

"Gentlemen," said the Premier, "my Foreign Secretary and I have differed on the matter of approach to Italy. These are the two points of view."

At the end he asked for a decision from each Minister. Not one supported Eden.

"Very well," said the young man, "I place my resignation in your hands."

The Cabinet were aghast. They had assumed that their advice was being sought, but never imagined a crisis existed. Chamberlain then sent for Count Grandi, Italian Ambassador, explained what had happened, and asked if Mussolini would make some gesture of good will to ease Cabinet strain and make it possible for Eden to withdraw his resignation. Grandi at once communicated with Mussolini, who promised to send his reply by Monday morning. Sunday morning, a message came to Chamberlain from a private source in Rome. It said, "Mussolini's reply will be favourable. He has accepted the British formula for withdrawing volunteers from Spain."

I have reasons for believing the message came from Lady Chamberlain, the widow of Sir Austen, who was in Rome and in close touch with Mussolini.

Chamberlain was overjoyed, and, sending for Eden, told him the good news. Eden crossed to the Foreign Office, where the tension was terrific. "This is the end," they said to Eden. "Now we do not even receive information except by courtesy of the Prime Minister through his private representatives abroad."

Once more Eden crossed to Downing Street. The crowds cheered him madly, and newspapers were rushing countless editions on the street. Five minutes later he walked out alone. The Cabinet stared at each other. The Foreign Secretaryship was vacant. Anthony Eden, the Sir Galahad of world events, had followed Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare.

That is the strange story of the young man who

shared the world's idolatry with the Prince of Wales.

To my mind, his resignation was the least worthy action of a notable career. To have endured so much and then to give way on a question of mere procedure was sheer anti-climax. Certainly it lacked greatness. He should have known that it was certain to unloose all the hysteria of the jingo pacifists who have become Britain's greatest political problem, yet he did it with dignity and he went without a single appeal for sympathy.

He will come back in due time. Perhaps a few years ahead we shall see him Prime Minister in a world made decent by his own efforts when he was Foreign Secretary, and by the courage of Neville Chamberlain who had grasped the nettle with such a firm, unfaltering hand.

# *Portrait of Lord Halifax*

THOSE WHO knew Lord Halifax intimately were not surprised at his decision to take the office vacated by Mr. Eden. He did not want it. He never sought it. He knew that anything in the nature of a personal triumph was out of the question, for the days of triumphs in British foreign policy are a long way back and a long way ahead.

Yet when Mr. Chamberlain asked him to become Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax did not hesitate. "I agree," he said. He knew that Britain and perhaps Europe needed him. No other argument would be necessary.

Shortly afterward his appointment was challenged in the House of Commons. To Mr. Attlee and his colleagues it seemed wrong to have a Foreign Secretary in the House of Lords removed from the machine-gun barrage of Socialist questions.

Mr. Chamberlain rose to reply. Courteously and clearly he explained his problem. Then he glanced at his Front Bench, where the gilded Cabinet birds of paradise sat in their glory.

"I have a ministry of many talents," said the Prime Minister, "but frankly I could not find among my colleagues those peculiar qualities which made Lord Halifax the best man for the position."

The feathers of the birds of paradise moulted noticeably. It is always a difficult moment for the others in a beauty contest when the judge makes his final choice.

What then are these qualities to which Mr. Chamberlain paid such high tribute?

Before we answer that question come along with me to the Foreign Office and we shall have a look at Lord Halifax in his room. Unlike his predecessors, his table

is not at one end of the room. It is in the centre, a homely, simple arrangement which gives the effect of a library. The Foreign Secretary greets us with rather a shy smile and then, adjusting his glasses, sits down and waits for us to begin. I imagine that he always makes the other man lead.

One notices with sympathy that his left arm is useless, like that of the Kaiser, and his right hand performs its tasks of taking a cigarette and lighting it with that dexterity which nature always brings to offset a loss.

Now we have put our case. Lord Halifax comes out of the clouds and looks at us to make quite sure that we have concluded.

"Yes," he says. His voice is impressive. It is rather deep and well upholstered. There is nothing stringy or breathy about it. It is a voice.

"Yes." Lord Halifax studies us without malice or modesty. "There is undoubtedly a case to make for your point of view." His hand reaches to his glasses and they are lowered half an inch on the bridge of his nose. That is a concession to our side of the case.

"As a matter of fact," his deliberate voice resumes, "yours is a case that would probably win in a court of law."

The glasses come down another half-inch. Lord Halifax considers the aspect of everything for a moment, then removes them and waves them in a slow circle in front of his nose.

"I quite see your point," he says. There is a pause. Apparently he has no intention of proceeding with the subject any further. His face sinks into a gentle melancholy. Adjusting his glasses, he leans over his table as if to see what is next on his engagement pad.

"Beyond its plausibility," he remarks without looking up, "your case is preposterous and mendacious."

I am not sure that Lord Halifax is even aware of that

mannerism, but it is characteristic. When he opens fire it is always from a masked battery. His opponent, who has been lulled into a false security, is caught unawares. If Lord Halifax ever tells a foreign ambassador that we have decided to declare war, it will come as an aside from among the papers on the table.

He is not spectacular. He neither inspires publicity nor likes it. The newsreels cannot fatten on his carcass, and the gossip writers will not find him an answer to the paragraphist's prayer.

Yet he has a personality that dwarfs others around him. One has a feeling that here is a man of fine intellectual achievement, a spirit of good will to men, a sense of pity for the troubled children of the world.

To find the secret of this personality, I suggest we go back for a moment to a lanky boy at Eton feeling rather shy and looking a little foolish in his Eton jacket because of his height. His physical infirmity limits his activities on the playing fields, so that he is not spoken of with any particular reverence by his schoolmates of that period. Unlike Byron who won imperishable fame by being chosen for the Eton Eleven (a fame that has not been destroyed even by his poetry) Lord Halifax (he was then the Hon. Edward Wood) left no other record than the simple admission, "Educated at Eton."

From Eton he travelled the well-worn path to Oxford. It is almost the only path that leads to the rich orchards of public life. Occasionally a Chamberlain or a Lloyd George reaches higher than the rest, but the plums that are both tasty and within reach fall naturally to the Eton-Oxford brigade.

At Christ Church, Oxford, young Edward Wood did very well indeed. His sense of background was enriched by the spires, and his love of learning was not frustrated as vigorously as it had been at Eton.

As a result he took a first history and was elected a Fellow of All Souls.

Still we can discover few signs of a man of destiny. There are no sparks from the anvil as in the case of the glittering "F. E. Smith" or the magnificent John Simon. Edward Wood looked as if he would not be more than just another man of character and culture who would find his way into the backwaters of our national life, and leave the heat of the noonday sun to the mad dogs of politics.

Appearances were deceptive, however. Young Mr. Wood intended to make for the main stream of events. First, however, he married. His bride was Lady Dorothy Onslow, the younger daughter of the Earl of Onslow. Then he moved on Westminster, and in the fateful election of 1910, when political destinies were in the melting pot, he won the decision at the Ripon Division of Yorkshire.

He made no particular impression on the House, however. That was the period when Arthur Balfour's régime was tottering to an end, when Walter Long and Austen Chamberlain struggled for the leadership of the Tory Party and accepted Bonar Law as a compromise, when Lloyd George was applying the whip to tradition and privilege, when Winston Churchill shared the limelight with the Irish Party, and when Asquith held aloft the banner of triumphant Liberalism. No wonder that a rather shy Back Bencher looked on and felt that where so many stars were gathered together there was no chance for a beginner.

Edward Wood found solace in the company of another Back Bencher of the Party who had entered Parliament two years earlier. He was an odd sort of fellow, half country squire and half poet. His name was Stanley Baldwin.

"I hate politics," said Baldwin.

"They are a bit trying," murmured Mr. Wood, as they sat in the smoke-room and looked at the Thames.

Mr. Wood had another friend. He was a fellow

Etonian, a dark, energetic, vital young man who was born to command. His name was George Lloyd and he had entered Parliament for West Staffordshire in the same vintage year of 1910. For reasons that I have already given, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Wood had plenty of time to talk and their discourse was on the future of the Conservative Party. It is one of the inevitabilities that it is during periods of opposition that parties always concern themselves with their future. It might not be a bad idea if some consideration were given to it when they are in office.

Mr. Lloyd was not the kind of politician to be content with talk. He felt that something must be done about it. Whereupon Mr. Wood and Mr. Lloyd wrote a joint book on the subject. It is interesting to picture the philosopher and the man of action in collaboration in those days when one sees them in later years as implacable enemies over the fate of an Empire—the one Viceroy of India and the other a great proconsul in the shadows.

But at this stage we must bring in that factor which is inseparable from the biography of any statesman of the day. I refer to the war that broke upon the world, severing companionships, breaking and making careers, blinding the eyes of some and opening a new world to the eyes of others. It came like the wind, and at the end the reputations of pre-War years were gone with the wind.

Mr. Wood, despite his infirmity, was an intrepid rider. He rode gallantly in the hunting field, and in the War he mounted a horse and went to France with the Yorkshire dragoons. He was mentioned twice in dispatches, and ended up as a colonel of his regiment.

A good soldier, a considerate officer and a brave man. But there were thousands to whom that description would apply. He had made no mark in his four years of Parliament. He had done well but not brilliantly in the War.

Unlike the characters in Wagner's "Ring" who are



always preceded by a special musical motif, it is difficult to find any warning shadows in the earlier stage of Lord Halifax's career. At the same time, men of position and character are not so numerous that they can be left on the side forever.

Mr. Wood returned to Westminster. There he found the Coalition Government in a sort of consumptive brilliance. All governments are born to die, but Mr. Lloyd George and his glittering Ministry were approaching their end in a state of fevered pulses that gave them the deceptive assurance that they would live for ever.

Stanley Baldwin was President of the Board of Trade, disillusioned, his soul seared by the horror and obscenity of the War, and his heart sick with the manoeuvres of politics. He and Edward Wood resumed their friendship and mourned the death of idealism. Again and again Mr. Baldwin wanted to give it all up, but his wife urged him to "stick it for one more year."

In 1921, however, Mr. Wood was given junior office. He was made Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, a post which entails much hard work but gives a Minister little chance to impress the House of Commons. I imagine that Mr. Baldwin urged the appointment, although this is mere surmise, or at least not more than deduction, on my part.

Then came the fateful Carlton Club meeting when the Tory Party threw off the yoke of the Coalition and before nightfall saw their leader, Mr. Bonar Law, established as Prime Minister in the place of Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. Baldwin went to that meeting determined to speak against Lloyd George and leave politics for ever. He never dreamed that his valedictory speech would prove a prelude to his own premiership.

Edward Wood was completely with him in spirit. If Mr. Lloyd George had won the day—and it was a very near thing—there is hardly any question but that the two friends would have left the political scene together.

Instead they enjoyed the fruits of unexpected victory. Stanley Baldwin was made Chancellor of the Exchequer by Mr. Bonar Law, and Edward Wood was given the congenial post of President of the Board of Education. Never was a man more suited to a task by temperament and training.

Bonar Law, wearied by his War effort and heart-broken by the death of his two elder sons, gave way under the strain and died. Mr. Baldwin became Premier, while the future Lord Halifax found himself in a position of influence far beyond that of his official appointment. As a Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin preferred the counsel of those who felt and thought like himself. While not a deeply religious man in the literal sense, he was much impressed by Mr. Wood's open devotion to the Church, to his teaching and practising of Christianity; and his belief in the efficacy of prayer.

We now see Edward Wood as a force behind the scenes—not in the manipulating of Ministers but in influencing the course of policy at its source. The public were unaware of him. The newspapers made nothing of him. His fellow Ministers looked upon him as a pilgrim who was merely tarrying in the Commons for a spell.

Earl Baldwin, however, possessed a puckish as well as an idealistic mind. Those whom the gods love die young. Those whom Mr. Baldwin loved he made Minister for Agriculture—always the most thankless task in the Administration. He did it with W. "Shakespeare" Morrison, his white-headed boy, in his last Cabinet reshuffle. He did it with Edward Wood when the Conservative Party came back to power in 1924, after the Zinoviev letter had thrown out the Socialists. Perhaps it was the Baldwin conscience determined to demonstrate that one could not enjoy his affection without its afflictions.

Mr. Wood nearly made a success of Agriculture. If

that is an overstatement, let it be modified to the simple record that farmers grumbled less during his short régime than they usually do.

But his fate was not to be decided in the ploughed fields of the countryside. India was casting its shadow over the British Raj. Mahatama Gandhi, with his fleshless body and his adroit mind, was rousing the slumbering political consciousness of India's teeming millions.

Shadows of another rebellion flitted across the sun-scorched face of India. Local politicians, as shrewd as any of their European brothers, saw the opening of the golden gates of opportunity. The assassin's bullet shattered the air, the surging mobs gathered like herds of their own sacred cows and opposed authority with their mute and passive stolidity.

"Edward," said the Prime Minister, "I want you to go to India."

To be a Viceroy of India! How many ambitious men have dreamed of that as the climax of life's glories? To be more regal than Royalty, to move like a god among the prostrate masses, to be military and civil head of a subcontinent, to receive the tribute of princes whose palaces had risen from the pages of Oriental romance . . .

Not only that. To follow in the footsteps of Canning, Elgin, Lytton, Lansdowne, Minto, and Curzon! And all this while yet a commoner.

"I hate display and ceremony," Wood told his friends, "but I think that I may be able to do some useful service there for humanity."

That was more or less the last utterance of the Hon. Edward Wood. Just as in the case of John Buchan who was made Lord Tweedsmuir before he reached Ottawa as Governor-General, so the retiring Minister for Agriculture was created the first Baron Irwin.

It takes the public a long time to get to know a name and a long time to forget it. The man on the street

learned that Lord Irwin was now Viceroy of India and simply said that he had never heard of him. This name changing is certainly one of the perplexities of our public life. Who would have suspected that when our ambassador, the Earl of Perth, began the conversations with Signor Mussolini, he was actually our old friend Sir Eric Drummond of the League of Nations?

Lord Irwin's administration of India created a deep rift of controversy. The Diehards died harder than ever. Mr. Churchill saw in Lord Irwin's reforms the beginning of disaster, the Conservative Party racked with dissension, the idealists sang Irwin's praise in a very high key, and the retired colonels in the Pall Mall clubs developed an alarming degree of purple.

When the situation in India was most acute, Lord Irwin had a long conference with Gandhi. It seemed impossible to reach any compromise, and at last Gandhi rose, "I must consult the Congress leaders," he said. The interview had failed. Any practised negotiator knew that the game was up. In some way, by some stroke of genius, Gandhi must be prevented from going back to the firebrands.

"I am glad that you are going back to consult your leaders," said Lord Irwin. "I shall pray for God's blessing on your deliberations."

Gandhi the mystic, Gandhi the idealist, Gandhi the politician, went out and pondered over this strange happening. Hitherto he had always thought of British officials as men who offered justice at the point of the bayonet. This tall Englishman with the sad and gently humorous face was something different, something he could understand.

At any rate Gandhi came back and agreed to go to London and attend the Round Table Conference in London. That was the end of Gandhi's power as a potential Indian Hitler or Lenin—however you may choose to regard it.

I do not propose to take sides on the Irwin reforms, as that is not the purpose of this article. They are still a matter of acute dissension, and their justification must depend on developments.

At the age of forty-nine Lord Irwin's return to England was both cheered and booed at Victoria Station. A number of the Punjab community in London garlanded him with flowers, while Mr. Wedgewood Benn, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Lord Sankey, and Mr. George Lansbury welcomed him on behalf of the Government of the day. The Leader of the Opposition was there too, Mr. Stanley Baldwin.

The King made him a Knight of the Garter, and a statue was erected in his honour at Delhi. The man who cared nothing for ceremony was enduring a considerable amount of it.

"Although I have come home," said the returning Vicroy, "I have left part of my heart in India. It beats there for a great country which I hope to see win through to a partnership in our Imperial future; an India shaping its own internal destinies under the guidance of Great Britain and with her co-operation and confidence."

The High Churchman who had won honours at Oxford and had played a man's part in the War had become a figure of importance in the public life of his country.

As soon as he could he left London and journeyed to Doncaster to visit his ninety-two year old father. The affection between father and son was deep and sincere. In India Lord Irwin wrote constantly to him, and their reunion was a great joy to them both. First, however, the man who hated ceremony had to submit to a civic reception at Doncaster and then a "Young England" scene at Hickleton Hall, the family residence, where Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, villagers and tenants welcomed the wanderer home.

Less than three years later, on the day that Lord

Irwin was to have received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Liverpool University, Viscount Halifax died and the degree was conferred in the absence of the recipient.

The grand old peer had led an honourable and upright life, and he died in the faith that he was going to the God whom he had served on earth.

Lord Irwin was not the eldest son; actually he was the fourth son, but the eldest surviving one. Thus did Lord Irwin disappear from the scene like the Hon. Edward Wood. Instead, there was a Viscount Halifax whom the public did not know and had never heard of.

He was appointed Chancellor of Oxford University in the same year that he inherited the title, but it was not until 1935 that he reappeared on the political scene when he became leader of the House of Lords.

That is not a post that attracts the limelight. It is true that when Chamberlain was chosen by his Party to succeed Earl Baldwin it was Lord Halifax who presided, but he was unknown to many members of the Party.

Then a few months ago he blazed into the headlines. An evening newspaper in London came out with spectacular headlines and declared that Lord Halifax was going to Germany to talk to Herr Hitler.

There were clumsy official attempts to deny the story. It was explained that Lord Halifax, who himself is a master of hounds, was going to Berlin to attend a hunting exhibition. If in the course of his visit he should happen to meet those well-known sporting figures, Herr Hitler and General Goering, that would be one of those coincidences beyond human control.

Mr. Eden who was away, returned to London in a towering rage and proffered his resignation. He saw the writing on the wall, but Mr. Chamberlain poured oil on his troubled emotions and Eden agreed to carry on.

Lord Halifax went to that quiet retreat of Herr Hitler's at Berchtesgaden, where amid the scent of flowers

and the murmur of the breeze in the trees, the German leader prepares his famous Saturday matinees for Europe.

No one quite knows what happened. Perhaps neither Halifax nor Hitler was quite sure. It was probably a study in atmosphere by two mystics.

Nevertheless Lord Halifax must have convinced Mr. Chamberlain that an understanding was possible. Otherwise he would hardly have chanced his place in history on the policy that drove Mr. Eden from the Cabinet and precipitated a political crisis of the first magnitude.

Now Lord Halifax sits in the House of Lords, the man who must try to steer a straight course in waters that are furious with tempest and full of dangerous shoals.

He will not panic. Nor will he lack strength if the pursuit of peace fails. The public will never know him, and his critics will not understand him.

But he will not shirk nor ask for sympathy. With his one good arm he will point humanity to higher things, he will pray for guidance as he did in India, and if he ever finds an afternoon free in the hunting season he will ride to hounds and take the stiffest jumps like a boy who feels the wine of youth inflaming his veins.

# Men of the Future

THE THEATRE of Westminster is a place where the lights are never dimmed. The play of personalities, the swiftly changing human values, the seizing and fumbling of opportunities, the hopes and heartbreaks of the ambitious, the triumphs of the plodder or the collapse of the brilliant—it goes on year after year, the nonstop drama of British politics.

And just as in an ordinary theatre, each star at Westminster has an understudy, sometimes more than one. There is no possibility of the play ending merely because the leading man takes ill or breaks his neck. Unlike the ordinary theatre where the understudy has to stay hidden in the dressing-room or kicking his heels in a little café next door, the young men of Westminster are in full view of their elders, on the same stage, and word perfect if called upon at a moment's notice to play any of the stellar rôles.

To drop the theatrical metaphor, it would be unfair to give the impression that personal ambition rules out all questions of personal loyalty. On the contrary, there is an admirable, almost schoolboy sense of teamwork among Ministers of all grades. Perhaps it is intensified by the knowledge that without teamwork no one's task can succeed. It also goes deeper than that. Politics create the one setting where personal ambition and *esprit de corps* are actually indispensable to success.

One of the never-ending topics of conversation among politicians is, "Who are the men of the future?" Introduce that topic into any dinner party where M.P.'s are present, and the bridge tables remain neglected for the rest of the evening.

Assuming that the National Government will hold



office for another ten years, and it is difficult to see any alternate Government seizing power before that time, we have the following situation :

Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party:

Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

Three Senior Chiefs of Staff:

Sir John Simon

Sir Samuel Hoare

Sir Thomas Inskip.

If Mr. Chamberlain should decide to retire within the next two years, he would undoubtedly advise His Majesty to send for one of these three gentlemen. It is not within the scope of this article for me to suggest which one it would be, although I have my ideas.

On the other hand should Mr. Chamberlain hold office for three or four years and then retire, the whole affair would be complicated by the younger men whose claims would have to be considered. In other words he could not ignore

Anthony Eden

William Shepherd Morrison

Leslie Hore-Belisha

Oliver Stanley.

I suggest that we should examine these youngish men, look dispassionately at their careers and their personalities, and read the crystal for them. When it is finished they may not agree with the reading, but that will not worry us. Unlike the witches of *Macbeth*, I do not want to direct a man's destiny by prophesying from a cauldron; or from a crystal either.

Before the sensational resignation of Mr. Eden from the post of Foreign Secretary, his position within the Conservative Party was growing stronger each month.

His difficulties were always recognised, and his patient courage applauded.

If it is true that style makes the man, then Anthony Eden has the most obvious human qualities for eventual leadership of the Party. Only two post-war politicians in this country have inflamed public imagination, Earl Baldwin and Mr. Eden. The former won the affection of the country with his air of being a country squire who had wandered into politics by chance, a benevolent, unselfish and absolutely honest Englishman with a love of books, a passion for pigs, and a flair for pipe smoking. The other and younger man flashed across the sky like a meteor. His dark hair, his fine features, his slim waist and broad shoulders, his smile, his clothes, his camera-bility (if I may coin the word) and his news-realism (if I may coin another)—all these things caused the women of the world to take to their hearts the youth who bore mid snow and ice the banner with the strange device, "*Geneva uber alles.*"

Like all other National Government M.P.'s, I received a considerable number of votes in 1935 because Mr. Eden was in our team. Next to Earl Baldwin, he was the greatest personal factor in that glittering electoral triumph.

I have already described the career and characteristics of Mr. Eden. I know, of course, the great admiration and sympathy for him which exist in Canada, and I would not write any word now to lessen that feeling. There is no question at all that he possesses outstanding qualities and, of course, a most spectacular personality. Lady Oxford was telling me the other day about the furious temper of Anthony Eden's father, the late Sir William Eden. The tale lacked nothing in the telling, but allowing for the spice in "Margot's" famous conversational style, one could not help but visualise a remarkable and formidable character. Sir William's rages swept the countryside, and he was much admired for

them. Therefore, when we praise Anthony Eden for keeping cool so long when he held the position of Foreign Secretary, we must remember that he was reared on a barrel of gunpowder and nourished in a hurricane.

As a political leader he possesses the great quality of spiritual simplicity. I might even go further and say that he possesses intellectual simplicity. Unlike his personality, which is vivid and colourful, his mind goes steadily on one track. Such consistency as that almost invariably commands public esteem. On the other hand, diplomacy in these days requires subtlety as well as strength, and I think Eden's downfall came about because he would not vary his plan to the altering circumstances of Europe. More than any other man, he was responsible for alienating Italy and driving her into the arms of Germany. I admit at once that it was his faithfulness to the League of Nations ideal that brought this about. But if we praise a man's idealism, we must also estimate the cost to the country. Italy should never have been allowed to enter into the German orbit of influence.

At the same time, we cannot deny the fact that Eden is outstanding in his generation and that the House of Commons had produced no one among the younger Ministers so capable of leading.

Is he then the obvious choice for leader of the Conservative Party five years from now?

That is not an easy question to answer. His return to his former importance offers many difficulties. It is true that he left a noticeable gap in the Cabinet when he strode from the Westminster stage, but nature abhors a vacuum and new reputations are always on the make. G. B. Shaw wrote in one of his plays that the difference between a duchess and a flower girl is the way you treat them. The difference between a back bencher and a front bencher is often nothing more than the way you listen to them. And, as I remarked at the beginning of

this letter, the understudies are always standing in the wings.

I do not believe that Mr. Eden's political career is ended. The difficulty will be in finding the road back to office. As long as Mr. Chamberlain remains Prime Minister, Eden stands as a man who challenged the Premier's policy. Supposing Chamberlain gave him the post of Home Secretary or Secretary of State for India, Eden would still be in the position of a Minister who, as a member of the Cabinet, would have to share the responsibility of the Government's Foreign policy. It might even be said that he could only come back if Mr. Chamberlain's policy collapsed.

It will be agreed therefore that the return of the pilgrim is not easy. Mr. Eden's reputation remains untarnished, but his resignation, whether justified or not, has complicated the chart of his career. He could, of course, become a great ambassadorial figure, and one need only mention the post of Ambassador to Washington to realise what immense value he could be to the Empire. I cannot, however, see him becoming leader of the Conservative Party unless a completely unforeseen upheaval occurs. A few months ago I would have made him my first choice for the ultimate leadership. Now I must merely include him as a "possible."

However, the viewing committee is clamouring for a second applicant, so we shall page William Shepherd Morrison, the ruling favourite in the Maiden Stakes at Westminster.

The very air trembles with vitality as he enters. His piercing dark eyes turn on us like headlights searching for obstacles in the road. His heavy black eyebrows are like a double reprimand to his wiry grey hair, which bristles upward and outward like a startled brush. He is gaunt yet oddly young of body. His mouth is firm, argumentative and humorous. Looking at him we feel that one of two things is coming, a Knoxian de-

nunciation of the frivolities of humanity or a deeply humorous jest.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen." It is a voice to put the Sassenach in his place. The "r" is rolled with defiant respectfulness as though to say: "If a Scot must submit himself for examination by his inferiors, let him do so with a proper appreciation of his racial condescension in doing so." Then a smile widens the lips and one realises that it is a game to him as well as a crusade. And the heart warms to this savage Scot who has cut his way through life with nothing but his own claymore and feeds after the battle on a mixed grill of Burns and Shakespeare.

His own people in Scotland threw him out twice when he tried to enter Parliament, so he crossed the border to the slow-thinking English and was enthusiastically elected M.P. in 1929 for Cirencester and Tewkesbury. Not only was he elected, but his constituents have since raised the money for his election expenses.

When the National Government came into power, Morrison soon began to make his presence felt. As there was no opposition left from the Socialist benches, Mr. Churchill had enlivened the proceedings by leading the prolonged revolt against the India Bill. One night the debate was going badly for the Government. Morrison was sent for from the smoke-room to hold back the Churchillian hordes, and hurled himself at them like the French Army which was sent to the front in taxicabs in 1914.

With piercing eyes and resonant voice he laid about him with the fervour of a Samson smiting the Philistines, but not with the jawbone of an ass. His passionate love of democracy and his detestation of privilege standing in the way of progress were his weapons, and he threw them like javelins at the head of the great Churchill. He hurled scorn and ridicule upon the leader of the revolt. He smote him hip and thigh. He mocked him,

denounced him, pitied him. Churchill, the hero of a thousand Parliamentary battles, breathed fire through his nostrils like Siegfried's dragon but he could not escape.

Morrison was marked at once for office. But first he became chairman of the 1922 Committee—that powerful body of Conservative M.P.'s which exerts so powerful an influence upon the Ministry. In 1935 when the Government was again returned he was appointed Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the one junior post that is recognised to be an immediate prelude to the Cabinet. He revelled in the nation's finances with all the sagacity and sensuality of his race when it deals with money. The front bench was his spiritual home, and he entered upon it as his kingdom.

A little more than a year later there was a Cabinet reshuffle. Morrison heard the news with a glint of triumph in his eye, but an imprecation of disappointment. He was in the Cabinet all right, but now he had to ride the ploughed fields of Agriculture, where the hoofs sink deeper and deeper and the huntsman is never in at the kill.

Nevertheless his jubilant fellow countrymen in Scotland drank deep to his honour, and he was invited to be the guest of honour at the Caledonian Club in London. For reasons not so apparent, I was also asked as a guest and to make a minor speech.

It was a grand affair. If a bomb had exploded in that gathering, half the highest executives in England would have been blown to pieces. The haggis was piped in and the piper duly rewarded with a drink by the president. A choir from the Hebrides brought tears to all eyes with the lament of the Scot exiled from his native country. One felt that the Flying Scotsman at Euston Station might at any moment be overwhelmed in the rush.

Morrison was acclaimed to the roof. He was called upon for a "sentiment" which means something between

a speech and an address. He chose "Perseverance" or as he pronounced it, "Pairsavairance." Three hundred company chairmen and directors nodded their heads in sympathy.

"Pairsavairance, gentlemen." He spoke of struggle to an audience that rejoiced in it. He spoke of disappointment to an audience that had eaten it with its boyhood porridge. He spoke of waiting to an audience that knew how to wait.

When he was finished, Scotia acclaimed her son and Morrison sat down flushed with a well-deserved triumph. Then they called on me. It was like asking for a piccolo after a trombone.

Being unable to speak for Scotland, I spoke for England. I asked why the Scots had rejected their brilliant native son and driven him to the camps of the Sassenach. Then I asked why they had listened with such awe to a speech on perseverance from a man who had leapfrogged from the back benches into the Cabinet almost on arrival at Westminster.

I must say they took the jibes in excellent part and laughed more heartily than I deserved. Then the choir ended the evening with another exile's lament, and they all went home to their massive London residences to sleep.

Actually Morrison has perseverance, or at any rate determination. He could have made £3,000 a year at the Bar when he chose instead to draw £400 a year as a private member and give practically his whole time to Parliament. When he was appointed Financial Secretary to the Treasury at £1,500, he could have been earning £10,000 a year at the Bar. There was nothing to stop him becoming one of the leading pleaders of our time in the courts, but his soul had been surrendered to the old Mother of Parliaments.

He was never unsure of himself. Like Euclid, he believes that a straight line is the shortest distance

between two points. Thus we find him in the War in 1914. He emerged a captain of artillery, wounded, three times mentioned in dispatches, and an M.C. One can almost hear him saying in 1918: "That was that! Now let's get on with the real business of life."

Morrison has not made any great success of the Department of Agriculture for the simple reason that no one can. A nation that plans its economy on importing foodstuffs as payment for its manufactured goods, must always regard its own agriculture with an ungenerous eye.

Nevertheless William Shepherd Morrison will be a strong contender for the leadership of the Conservative Party and the Premiership. He has the overwhelming advantage of the Scottish barefoot-boy tradition. An Englishman will jest about anything but that. In its presence he is humble.

Morrison also has a warm humanity that does not lack a dignity of its own. He is no humbug. If he reads this article he will say to me: "I am much obliged. An article like that is very helpful." He won't even pretend that he had his attention called to it. In addition he has a Scottish wife whose whole outlook is so in tune with his that he is reinforced in every aspect of his character.

Whoever you back for the Maiden Stakes you cannot leave out the relentless and richly humorous Scot who sits for Cirencester and Tewkesbury, recites Gaelic to his children and plays Scottish laments on his violin.

From the barefooted boy of Scotland to the President of the Board of Trade. Let us take a look at Oliver Stanley, the man with the load of mischief.

If Oliver Stanley becomes Prime Minister, there will be many men who will be able to say honestly: "I told you so." If, on the other hand, he drifts out of politics altogether, having failed to consolidate his position, there will be an even greater number who will



be in a position to declare that they always predicted such an end.

Mr. Stanley is the man of climax and anticlimax. Fate is always handing him a rose and pricking him with its thorn. If London should ever be bombed I hope that I shall not be dining with the President of the Board of Trade at the time, despite his attractive wife and charming home. A splinter at least would be bound to hit us.

He is both lucky and unlucky. As I once wrote about him in an attempt to clear my own mind: "The gates swing open for him and the trees drop their leaves to make the path softer for his feet. Unfortunately, the trees also drop cocoanuts on his head."

Take his advantages first. To be born the second son of the seventeenth Earl of Derby is to have all the advantages of birth without the restrictions which limit the career of the eldest son. His brother, Lord Stanley, is an able minister, but the very fact that he is destined for the House of Lords closes the doors of both 10 and 11 Downing Street.

Oliver did well in the War. In fact it is worth noting that the qualities which won success in the line have produced political success for nearly all our younger Ministers. Needless to say, Stanley went to Eton which remains the supreme incubator of the nation's leaders in political life. I imagine, though, that the War was the real school of his character.

He emerged a major with an M.C. and Croix de Guerre, plus the passing immortality of dispatches. Afterward, in the proper tradition, he was called to the Bar but did not practice.

Here, in my opinion, Oliver Stanley blundered. He has a first-rate legal mind. His powers of concentration and elucidation are only surpassed by one Minister—the thinking machine called Sir John Simon. I do not claim that Mr. Stanley would have made juries weep or save murderers from the gallows. His forte would have

been in the realm of company law, where endless and intricate details formed a labyrinth where only an extraordinary mind could find the way out.

However, he did not embrace the law but moved on to Westminster, which he reached after an initial rebuff at the polls. The hereditary system in the House of Commons of course is very powerful. Joseph Chamberlain's sons were automatic choices for Ministerial posts. There is always a Cecil in the Government. Even the son of the late Ramsay MacDonald presides over the Dominions Office. Thus the two Stanley brothers were marked for office and, for reasons already outlined, the younger one was acclaimed as the man of the future. "On, Stanley, on!" they cried.

His marriage heightened his chances. A daughter of Lord Londonderry, witty, vital and with politics in her blood, Lady Maureen Stewart would need no coaching as the hostess of No. 10.

The House of Commons liked Oliver Stanley. He was friendly even if rather shy, showed great respect for the opinion of the humblest back bencher, and his grey hair and glasses made him look rather like a studious school-boy. The House loves men who keep their youth.

What is more, he paid the House the compliment of mastering all the details of his subject. He would have made a grand permanent head for any of the departments. As a civil servant advising himself, he would have been magnificent.

Unfortunately, the weaknesses in his armour were found in controversy. One must admit that he inherited some tough propositions—the Unemployment Regulations as Minister of Labour, the rising casualty list as Minister of Transport, and the Coal Bill and the Film Bill as President of the Board of Trade.

In all these measures he failed to defy his critics at the right moment, and equally failed to make concessions when they would have been accepted as a gesture of

generosity. Some say that this is lack of courage. I do not hold that view. It is more likely the legal mind sticking to a point because of its logical justification when the sentiment of the House demands its withdrawal. In other words, Parliament is a place where emotion plays a considerable part—and Oliver Stanley opposes emotion with the sword of clear reason.

I admire the President of the Board of Trade very much. In his home or in the day-to-day life of the Commons, he is sincere, courteous and unassuming. His civil servants like him enormously, and they are not given easily to hero-worship.

Then what are his chances for the ultimate leadership of the Party? I have a feeling that he is not lucky as a politician, and a man needs a lot of luck to reach Downing Street.

If he is not too busy firing generals, I suggest that we now call that blushing violet of Westminster, Mr. Hore-Belisha, to our presence.

Admiral Nelson is supposed to have said to Lady Hamilton: "If there had been no Emma, there would have been no Nelson." Similarly, one might contend that if there had been no Disraeli there would have been no Hore-Belisha.

The career of "Dizzy" fascinated Hore-Belisha all his life. If he is not quite so bizarre as his master, he is still colourful, theatrical, and more than a little flamboyant. Westminster is truly a stage to him, a stage hung with rich curtains and decorated with a throne before which he alternately played Hamlet or Cæsar according to his mood.

There is much of the actor about Leslie Hore-Belisha—but has it not been said that all successful men are good actors? Belisha not only dramatises himself but his office.

Early one morning we walked home together from the Commons during his regime at the Ministry of

Transport. To make agreeable conversation, I suggested to him that the nation's transport must be a heavy burden. He waved his hand airily: "My dear Beverley, when I am away from my office I forget it all. I have the power to put things out of my mind."

Just then a horn tooted as a motor went around the corner. "Monstrous!" ejaculated the Minister. "Where are the police? At this hour, too!" (In London no hooting is allowed after 11 p.m.).

I soothed him down, and we resumed our discussion on detachment. Again he stopped. We had reached a Belisha Crossing Beacon and his hand caressed its slim spine. "Fascinating things these," murmured the Minister. "They are as much part of London now as the Tower."

Again we resumed our walk through the silent and deserted streets. At a crossing I led the way when his arm pulled me back. "You must cross on the studs," he said earnestly. "It is the only safe way."

The man who could forget at will that he was Minister of Transport! He never forgot it for a moment—until he became Minister for War. A great actor is always an actor.

Shortly after his appointment to the War Office I met him at a private dinner. While he was just as cordial as ever and just as amusing, his manner, his voice and his appearance had changed in some curious way. Then it came to me. Instead of suave, elegant phrases, he was energetic, almost abrupt. His shoulders had straightened, and his movements were sharp and emphatic.

The philosopher of the Transport Office had become a major-general overnight. The best actor of Westminster had taken on another stellar rôle.

Is Leslie Hore-Belisha, then, a man whose name should be in theatre lights on Shaftesbury Avenue instead of stealing the political headlines? Has Parliament robbed the theatre of a star?

He is much more than an actor. He is a great political strategist. Above all, he has courage and vision.

The political head of a Government department requires different qualities altogether from those of the permanent head. He must understand the House of Commons and the public. That is why every "businessmen's government" in history has failed. Industrial chiefs have never learned the art of government by persuasion.

Paradoxically, that is one of the reasons why so many people scoff at politicians. They sneer at them because they bend with the breeze and only stand erect again when the storm has passed. On the other hand, let them fail to bend with the breeze and an outraged electorate screams, "Dictator!" Tyrant!" or "Diehard!"

Behind Belisha's genius for gauging the play of public opinion is a passion for public service. He has a love of this country and a vision of her enduring greatness which sometimes comes most clearly to the man whose racial origin is not in British soil. The winding path of Hore-Belisha's Jewish ancestry travelled through the troubled centuries and many lands before it found rest in England.

He believes that Great Britain has something to give to the world that no other nation can supply. That belief may bring him to Downing Street at a moment of crisis. Without a crisis he has no chance, for he is a man whose party is a mere remnant of political history, the little band of "Enlightened National Liberals" or "Liberal Mercenaries" (according to the point of view) that followed Sir John Simon and Mr. Hore-Belisha across the Great Divide to the National Government in 1931.

Given a crisis, Leslie Hore-Belisha can act swiftly. At such a moment he would be without fear. In addition, he has the power of summoning reserves of superb and compelling language that can voice the thoughts of the

nation. He can speak better than any Minister on the Government front bench if the occasion is worth it.

I like his irony and his melancholy. "Never come into the House of Commons," he once said to me when we were spending the week-end together in the country. "It is heartbreak house." One night when half a dozen of us were dining together, the talk turned to the Great War. "We belong to the lost generation," said Hore-Belisha as the smoke from his cigar floated upward like a wraith. "We are not men but merely ghosts. There is no place for us in the world. The old men hold the fortress and the younger generation hammer at the gates. We are nothing. Only those who were killed are real. We are but shadows."

The next day one of the Labour leaders made a speech attacking the Government. "A sheep in sheep's clothing," remarked Hore-Belisha, and his face lit up with delight at the zest of political battle.

Belisha wants power. He wants it hungrily because only through it can he find self-expression. He is a romantic in love with love—but though happiest in company of women, he remains unmarried.

He is the outsider of the four in the Downing Street Stakes. On form he has no chance, but the jumps are high and if the track grows heavy and slippery the favourites may fall.

There is an old saying among gamblers: "Back the outsider of four." If you put your money on Hore-Belisha he will give you a great run for it, even if at the end we shall have to fish him out of the water and take him home in a tumbril.

These four young men are the future challengers to the political throne. By general consent Morrison is the heir apparent, but fate has a way of playing pranks with Scottish designs on thrones set in London.

Eden is the Prince Rupert or, shall we say, Charles Stuart the younger? He cannot be left out of any calcu-

lations, even if he will have to find his General Monk to prepare the way for him.

Stanley will wait for destiny and not court it. Sometimes it pays to wait. Sometimes it doesn't.

Hore-Belisha is the Pretender. His chances depend on the unexpected, but in politics one must expect the unexpected.

Thus, like a racing tipster, I have summed up in such a manner that whichever one wins I shall have clearly indicated it in these notes.

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## *His Father's Son*

IN MAY of this year there was a certain liveliness at Westminster. Mr. Chamberlain was in a dilemma, and all was not well on the Government Front. There had been three successive by-election defeats. The Air debate took place and the malcontents brought down Lord Swinton and Lord Winterton, who were responsible for the Air Ministry. Mr. Ormsby-Gore, the Secretary for the Colonies, had been called to the House of Lords by Fate and in consequence resigned his office.

The Cabinet had to be strengthened. Sir Kingsley Wood was sent to succeed Lord Swinton. But there was the Colonial Office with its vexed problems of Palestine and the demand of Germany for the return of colonies. Where was the man who could face such a challenge with the confidence of Parliament and the public?

The choice was automatic. Malcolm MacDonald, sometimes called the "Boy Wonder of the Cabinet," was given the job. Every one breathed more easily. If ever there was a square peg for a square hole it was this cheerful, diminutive thirty-seven year old bachelor who had made a success of the Dominions Office, pulled off the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and was being mentioned as an ultimate Foreign Secretary.

In politics it has been well said that the impossible frequently happens and the inevitable seldom occurs. Malcolm MacDonald is an excellent example of that paradox. Let us turn back the calendar to August, 1914. A boy of thirteen, rather undersized and pale, gets on an omnibus. The Great War has just begun and life has become bewildering and as noisy as the rivetting on a new building. Voices are raised in the bus, for the new



comradeship has arrived and the shyness of the British race has gone with the wind.

"What do you make of this Ramsay MacDonald?" asks one man of another. "He ought to be shot for a traitor," is the reply.

There is an angry chorus of approval from the other passengers, women as well as men. The little boy shrinks into a corner. At the first opportunity he gets off and continues his journey on foot.

The next day he travels on the Underground. "A traitor is a traitor," he hears a passenger proclaiming, "and his being an M.P. makes it so much worse."

Three years go by. His father tries to board a ship to take him to Russia. British sailors refuse to take him on a British ship.

Malcolm MacDonald has since admitted that in those ghastly years, haunted by the cursing of his father's name, he formed a definite political ambition.

"My ambition," he said, "was that some day I should be the son of the Prime Minister of Great Britain."

And four times was Ramsay MacDonald Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Thirty-seven years ago Malcolm MacDonald was born at Lossiemouth, the eldest of five children. In the fullest sense of the term Ramsay MacDonald was happily married. Nothing in the whole literature of biography expresses a greater tribute to a woman than the story of his wife's life which he wrote after her death.

Allowing for the romanticism of a man who was essentially a poet, allowing for that ecstasy of grief which poets permit themselves, allowing for the idealisation of the dead which is love's last tribute, there can be no doubt that the marriage of Ramsay MacDonald and his wife was one of the idylls of their age.

I am dwelling on this for a moment, because to understand Malcolm MacDonald you must study the conditions under which he was born. We are not only

children of our parents. We are children as well of the circumstances surrounding our parents at that time.

Life had been a sparkling adventure for Ramsay MacDonald and his wife when Malcolm arrived. The Labour Party was in the throes of the intellectual-evangelical-pioneer stage. It is true the word "socialist" in those days was just once removed from "anarchist"; but Ramsay MacDonald, the handsome young leader, held a veritable salon when he was in London, and there were bright feminine eyes that fastened on his features and felt that Socialism was the only possible creed.

Sensitive to admiration though he was, Ramsay MacDonald had eyes and ears and heart only for one woman. Thus he went on his stately way, his rich voice summoning the faithful to the new religion, his wife always by his side and an ever-growing army of men and women anxious to end "this sorry scheme of things entire and then remould it nearer to the heart's desire."

In London the MacDonalds lived in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and as a very small boy Malcolm went to the Passmore Edwards Kindergarten School in Tavistock Square. Afterwards he was entered as a pupil at the City of London School and would in all probability have remained there until the end of his schooldays had his mother lived. When Margaret MacDonald died, however, her husband was left with five children. The man who became four times Prime Minister of Britain was helpless. The world that he had built up came to pieces in his hands. His home which had been his refuge and his citadel seemed now to him nothing more than a place that meant memories. In these circumstances he decided that the two boys must go to a boarding school, and as a result Alistair and Malcolm were dispatched to Bedales in Hampshire.

They were two very sad little boys who went off together. In fact about the whole scene there is a strange atmosphere reminiscent of David Copperfield. Alistair

was big for his age. Malcolm was very tiny, yet as strong and wiry as a young colt.

On the night of their arrival the headmaster sent for Alistair, and Malcolm was left alone. A senior boy strolled up to him.

"What is your name, youngster?" he asked.

"Malcolm MacDonald," replied the small boy.

"Oh, that is far too long a name for a wee chap like you. We will call you Georgie." Turning to a group of boys who were lounging in the quadrangle he called out:

"Look here, you, this is Georgie."

One of the group was carrying a large waste-paper basket. A bright idea struck the owner.

"Let's put Georgie in the basket," he cried with that youthful instinct for torture which survives the civilising processes of the ages. It was duly done. Malcolm was pushed into the basket and was pitched about inside it for fully five minutes. It was a tempestuous and undignified introduction to his schoolmates. When it was over and they extricated him he looked at his tormentors with complete imperturbability. I have seen that same look on his face many times since when fate has tossed him about in a basket of its own.

Malcolm remained at the school from eleven years of age until he was eighteen, ending up as head boy. It must have been a harrowing time during the war years, but the headmaster was a man of great character, and apparently such persecution as might have been vented on the son of Ramsay MacDonald, the Pacifist, was circumvented. In 1933 when the headmaster died it is small wonder that Malcolm MacDonald wrote a public tribute to him which was full of gratitude. In passing it is also interesting to note that Malcolm to-day is a Governor of his old school and occasionally goes down on official duties. He always gets a rapturous reception.

His two favourite studies at Bedales were history and

literature. In the realms of athletics he did not create any fresh records, but his devotion to the "gym" was unending. Apparently he was determined that he would develop an endurance and strength of muscle which would carry him along when larger men would begin to feel the stress of the journey.

There was another aspect of his character, however, which was developed at Bedales. It was the habit of the school to have social entertainments made up entirely by the boys themselves. The programmes were highly original, ranging from poetical satires on the characteristics of the masters to feats of strength, short plays (several of which were written by the future Secretary of State) and song and dance numbers. In the latter Malcolm excelled all others, and even when he had reached years of maturity he retained a great longing to go on the stage as an eccentric dancer. Whether he still possesses that ambition or not I cannot say. Perhaps the intricacies and eccentricities of the political dance at Westminster satisfy that longing to the full.

But the accomplishment which drew the greatest admiration from his schoolfellows was his ability as a hand walker. At one concert he actually walked twice round the stage singing a song as he did so. This effort was received with a loud and respectful cheer. It was felt that Bedales had moved up in the world, Unfortunately for mankind the accomplishments of youth do not always carry a man through later years. It became necessary for Malcolm to walk not so much on his hands as upon his feet. And so we find that he won an "Exhibition" in history and went to Queen's College, Oxford.

There he came under the influence of a man who probably had more effect upon his character than any one else except his father. I refer to his tutor, Mr. Godfrey Elton, now Lord Elton. If one may argue that Lord Elton's rise to the peerage seemed inconsistent with his convictions no one can deny him his brilliant attain-

ments and erudition. When he was tutor to Malcolm he was an intellectual socialist (as he still is) and was only a few years older than his pupil. There sprang up between them a mutual regard and affection which obtains to this day. They share a common enthusiasm for reading, politics, old furniture, glass, pewter, first editions and historic documents.

Even now a room is reserved in each of their homes for the other. Lord Elton married some years ago, but Lady Elton looks upon Malcolm the bachelor almost as her own brother. There is something fine and enduring about the friendship of these two young men. Elton always predicted enormous success as a politician for his quondam pupil.

Every man who succeeds needs the strengthening of belief in the hearts of others. Self-confidence and self-distrust lie so near to each other and the inspiration or the doubts of a friend can often tip the scales one way or the other. Elton has the right to-day to say: "I played no small part in that career."

It was during the latter part of his stay at Oxford that Malcolm MacDonald was given an opportunity of entering the political arena. At the general election of 1923 the Labour Party wanted a candidate to oppose the Sir Ellis Hume Williams in the Bassetlaw Division of Notts. The pocket edition Socialist tackled the elegant barrister without success although it was a period when the incoming tide was strong for the Socialists. In the following year he fought the Division again but the tide was going out by that time, and Malcolm with many other Socialists was carried to the deep waters of oblivion. These were the first of many discouragements and humiliations which were to mark his political progress.

When he was finished at Oxford he was confronted with the problem of what to do for a living. It is not unnatural that his thoughts turned to journalism. The fourth estate

has a vagabond lure for all men who can express themselves. The amazing thing is that more politicians do not come from the ranks of journalism.

Malcolm MacDonald was given a job on a weekly periodical. The young man showed himself a competent journalist. He did interviews, articles, personal paragraphs, travel series, industrial reviews and an occasional life story of some prominent man or woman. Looking back upon those days Malcolm claims that he most enjoyed writing an article entitled "Has Jazz Come to Stay?" He took the affirmative in this serious question and claims that he had the gift of prophecy upon him in doing so.

Just as he was settling down to life in Fleet Street an invitation came to him to join an Oxford University Debating team about to set out on a world trip. Thus he had to take a choice between reasonable security and an adventure which would undoubtedly add riches to his mind but at the end would leave him once more confronted with the problem of making a career. He did not hesitate. He went abroad on tours and in many countries and on many platforms he debated the political situation of the day. Naturally, he took up the cudgels on behalf of his father's Party. Not long after his return in the year 1929 he once more stormed Bassetlaw. That was the year when the Conservative Party suffered its most damaging defeat, but this time the Socialist victors included Malcolm MacDonald, returned by a substantial majority.

The election was an historic triumph for the MacDonald clan, but it was to be short-lived. Malcolm was supporting the Government of which his father was the Prime Minister. It was the hectic Parliament of 1929 to 1931. Storm clouds were gathering over the world. The threat of economic collapse became a reality. The Labour Government, maintained in office by the querulous loyalty of the Liberals, staggered towards its collapse.

At last in the fateful August of 1931 the Government resigned. There was an incredible change-over and Ramsay MacDonald assumed his third Premiership as head of the first emergency National Government.

Once more there was an election, and Malcolm MacDonald fought Bassetlaw as a National Labour candidate. The sweep across the country in favour of the National Government almost annihilated both the Liberals and Socialists who remained in opposition. When the deluge was over and the new Ministry formed young Malcolm was rewarded with the appointment of Under Secretary to the Dominions Office. There was some reason for the grumblings among the Tories. Their numbers were so great that by the time the plums of office had been divided between the allies, the National Liberals, the National Labourites and the Conservatives, it meant that many Tories who had the right to expect office were pushed aside. There was no personal hostility to Malcolm MacDonald, but, among those who had spent their lives propagating the gospel of Empire, it was not pleasant to see the son of Ramsay MacDonald at the Dominions Office even in a subordinate position.

The new Under-Secretary did fairly well. He answered questions in the House with coolness and with clearness. It would be wrong to say that he was an outstanding success. He was competent and nothing more.

Then came the decline of his father. The man who had created the very soul of the Labour Party and had founded the National Government had lost the art of leadership and public speech. I have not space here to inquire into the cause of it. Perhaps he knew himself to be a prisoner of the Conservative Party and that his robes of leadership were too flimsy to be convincing. So he resigned and handed over the reins to Stanley Baldwin. In the reshuffle Malcolm MacDonald was made a Cabinet Minister, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

There were loud mutterings. A deposed king has few

friends, and the son of a deposed king even fewer. People said it smacked of a deal and that the appointment of Malcolm was the price of Ramsay's resignation. But the criticisms were forgotten in the election of 1935 when Mr. Baldwin once more led his forces to the country. This time the Tories swept the board, but their allies were not so successful. Ramsay MacDonald was defeated by an immense majority at Seaham Harbour; Malcolm lost Bassetlaw.

Parliament reassembled in all the high spirits of a great victory for the Government, but the two MacDonalds could not even set foot on the floor of the House. They were both cabinet Ministers but neither of them were members of Parliament—and yet men still give their hearts to that cruel mistress, Politics.

In the end the father was given a Scottish Universities representation. Malcolm went to Ross and Cromarty and fought a by-election in which his principal opponent was Mr. Randolph Churchill. It was a fierce fight and when Malcolm was declared the winner he celebrated it by walking once round the room on his hands. Faced with this, Randolph Churchill emulated Wolfe of Quebec by saying, "I would rather be able to do that than win Ross and Cromarty."

So the Secretary of State for the Dominions came back to Parliament and resumed his task. He showed no perturbation when his first appearance inspired mild cheers from the Government and contemptuous jeers from his old friends the Opposition. Months went by and a rumour began to spread that Malcolm was doing his job well. Visiting Prime Ministers from the Dominions sang his praises. They liked him. They found him constructive. I myself still felt some doubts, but when I dined with Mr. Mackenzie King at Ottawa he spoke in such terms of praise of Malcolm MacDonald that I could doubt no longer. Quietly he took on the difficult and delicate task of ending the breach with Ireland.



Negotiations dragged on for months when there came the tragic news of his father's death at sea.

In company with many others from both Houses of Parliament, I went to Westminster Abbey to pay tribute to the man I had known to some extent as a friend and whose spirit I had always admired regardless of his politics. At the end, when the cortege passed through the Abbey with Britain's greatest men as pall bearers, with the music of Brahms soaring to the rafters and an immense gathering of people come to do honour to the dead, Malcolm MacDonald followed behind the coffin as the chief mourner. He looked small and tired, strangely youthful and grimly tragic. It was the end of a story. It was the death of the man who had been his father and his friend.

What is there more to tell? One day when the Irish negotiations had reached a difficult point Malcolm MacDonald took De Valera to his cottage in Essex. They spent the whole day together in one of those patient humorous give-and-take talks which can accomplish so much in diplomacy. For hours the two men wandered round the moat and in the orchards close to the cottage. I have no means of saying whether the treaty of understanding was concluded there. I believe it had a lot to do with it.

When Malcolm came to the House after the announcement of the signing of the Treaty he received a tribute from all parties—from his colleagues who had doubted him and from the Labour Party whose hatred for the father had extended to the son. There are times when the passions of Parliamentary debate and the rigours of political fortune can make Westminster a veritable Heartbreak House. And there are times when the spontaneous spirit of generosity warms the heart and dignifies the whole spirit of our public life.

Malcolm MacDonald does not tower over the dispatch box when he speaks, but he stands high in the

estimation of the House. His success has not been one of genius. Nor has it been achieved by a superb seizing of an unexpected moment when by a brilliant adroitness one can sometimes secure a glittering prize.

No. His achievement has been built solidly on character. He did not whine when his schoolmates tossed him in the basket. He did not lose faith when his father was scorned by men, although his youthful sensitiveness must have suffered unbearable agonies. Somewhere in the soul of Malcolm MacDonald there is a flame which radiates his whole personality. His smile is genuine, his sense of justice deeply ingrained, his contempt for calumny as great as his belief in the final decency of human nature. And like so many men who are sensitive and who have suffered, he has been given the compensation of a rich vein of humour.

I wish that Ramsay MacDonald had lived to see the triumph of his son. He never doubted it would come any more than Malcolm doubted that his father would some day be the political head of the nation. But instead of Ramsay sitting in the House to hear the cheers for the young Secretary of State for the Dominions it was Malcolm who went to attend the final triumph of his father as his body was carried through Westminster Abbey and a nation bowed its head in homage.

A strange story, the saga of the two MacDonalds. . . . It should end like a film with a dissolve into a glimpse of Lossiemouth with the rolling of the surf and the hoarse cry of the gulls.

## *That Cliveden Set*

THE OTHER day a stockbroker said to me: "There are no brokers any more on the London Stock Exchange. There are only foreign secretaries. Nobody ever talks about shares. They just talk about Czechoslovakia."

In fairness it might be admitted that it is not only on the London Stock Exchange that foreign secretaries abound. The House of Commons is full of them, eager to impart at any cost and at any length their views upon the international situation.

But it does not end there. In the large and stimulating correspondence which I receive from Canada, I have detected the foreign-secretary virus. Especially in Saskatchewan and Alberta there are a number of letter writers who have a knowledge of European affairs which is not excelled, and indeed hardly equalled, by the British Foreign Office.

Some of these gentlemen writing to me do not ask that I should accept their own versions of things over here. It is true that they are quite certain and need no outside proof that Britain has become spineless, that Chamberlain is a boneless wonder, and that Eden was crucified because he was the only one who dared to stand up to the dictators. Nevertheless, to add verification and verisimilitude to a highly convincing narrative, they enclose articles from American magazines, written by oddly named experts in New York who know every secret of the British Cabinet and can explain exactly why the Prime Minister decided to sell the pass to Mussolini for a mess of spaghetti.

Of course the real triumph of these diplomatic sleuths of America was the discovery of the Cliveden set. Up to

that time there were certain things that baffled even these foreign secretaries whose thoughts are in Europe and whose bed-sitting rooms are in Brooklyn. But the Cliveden set explained everything. It was the key to the situation, the solution to the puzzle, the missing clue, the word of eight letters that finished the crossword puzzle.

Who am I to scoff? At what age does a man refuse to learn? I have read every word about the Cliveden set with avidity and, like the mad King Ludwig of Bavaria (and *Oliver Twist*), I have called for more.

Never has a story had a more perfect setting or satisfied so generously the adolescent appetite of the amateur detective that exists in all of us.

In case there are any readers of *Maclean's* who do not know what I am writing about, let me recall the strange story as vividly recorded in the U.S.A. and reproduced in nearly every country in the world.

The villain of the piece is Viscount Astor, the American-born British peer. The villainess is Nancy Astor, the sprightly Virginian gal who was the first woman to take her seat in the British Parliament and is now the Boadicea of British politics.

According to the American magazines, they are the modern Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, hardly aspiring to the throne, but more powerful than any king or queen. At the raising of one of Nancy's eyelashes, a humble back bencher leaps into the Cabinet. At a frown of Lord Astor's, he leaps back to obscurity once more like a motion picture put into reverse.

The name of the Astor's country house is called "Cliveden." Just for your guidance, it is pronounced "Cleevden," but that is no one's fault. In spite of that I shall refuse to call my son Clive "Cleeve."

American accounts of Cliveden differ. Taking a mean average, however, of the various descriptions which I have read, I put the Astor's domestic staff at:

14 butlers  
38 footmen  
100 housemaids  
12 cooks  
200 gardeners  
50 grooms  
25 chauffeurs.

Of course that is just their ordinary number, suitable for looking after the small, intimate week-end parties that determine the fate of Europe. If they had a real party the number of servants of all categories would be doubled.

I have forgotten how many acres Cliveden occupies. I gather from my reading, though, that it skirts the Thames, touches the Severn and just stops short of the Clyde. In fact Cliveden is a country estate entirely surrounded by England.

Now what do you think the villainous Macbeths do with their country house? Do they bother with the neighbours or the vicar or the local M.P.? Not a bit. They are after bigger fish. Nothing short of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the German Ambassador will suit them—and all arriving by different routes in limousines with drawn blinds.

A few moments later these nabobs are followed by Mr. Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of *The Times*, and Mr. J. L. Garvin, the editor of the *Observer*. They ride in cars with undrawn blinds, because, being journalists, they are not known to the mob.

After dinner (which has been served by the fourteen butlers) they retire into the library, where Nancy pulls down the blinds and moves a bookcase against the door to prevent any of the servants looking through the keyhole. The conspirators are completely alone except for the American reporters, who from their Brooklyn windows can see anything.

"Neville," says Nancy, "you've got to give Anthony Eden the order of the boot."

"My dear," says Lord Astor, "the same idea could be expressed in language more becoming the baronial surroundings which we enjoy because of our inherited American wealth."

"Europe would breathe easier," remarks the editor of *The Times*, "if Eden should catch a cold on his chest and have to take a long rest."

"Nothing matters but British friendship with Germany," puts in the editor of the *Observer*. "British Imperialism and German Nazism cannot be divided even by a man so guileless and so pigheaded as Mr. Eden."

Herr von Ribbentrop raises his hands in protest. "You must not think that we dislike Mr. Eden," he says. "He just makes us sick."

The Prime Minister had shrunk into his chair until he is indistinguishable from its pattern. He looks and feels like a worm. His eyes are bloodshot and his knees are trembling. He is in the presence of his masters and knows it.

"Eden's not a bad fellow," he mumbles apologetically. "I know he's young and impatient but——"

"Neville," Nancy's voice shatters the air like a pistol shot.

"I'm sorry." The Premier is now almost indistinguishable to the naked eye.

The conspirators confer for a moment. Lord Astor takes up the telephone which connects with a private switchboard which has 280 lines and 100 operators.

"Get Lord Halifax on the phone," snaps his lordship, "and ask him—I mean tell him—to come here at once."

Neville Chamberlain looks up with eyes more bloodshot than ever.

"I don't want to seem inquisitive," he stammers, "but is Halifax to be my new Foreign Secretary?"

The editor of *The Times* lights a cigarette. "It

will be intelligently anticipated in to-morrow's *Times*."

"And confirmed in Sunday's *Observer*," remarks Mr. J. L. Garvin.

Herr von Ribbentrop crosses to Lady Astor and kisses both her hands. "You have done this, noble lady, for Germany, for the Fatherland. Hitler will never forget."

"That's nothing," says the lady from Virginia. "Let me know if Halifax gives you any trouble and I'll kick him out too. I suppose you're satisfied with Neville?"

Herr von Ribbentrop gazes into her eyes. "In your hands," he whispers, "he is everything we admire in a British statesman."

I apologise to those of my readers who may think that I have dwelt too long on the farcical nature of the articles which have filled so many pages of American journals that specialise in knowing everything.

Nevertheless, if the legend of the Cliveden set means anything at all—and if you allow for the exaggeration of burlesque—British politics are conducted in the manner that I have described.

And since a denial in itself means nothing, I propose to examine quite seriously the claims that Mr. Chamberlain is a pathetic, sycophantic pawn in the hands of the Astors and the rulers of Germany.

That it is a serious charge, no one will question. That it is a monstrous and indecent charge, I hope to prove by the application of common sense and normal deductions.

Let us assess the power of Viscount Astor and his wife. To begin with, they do not own *The Times* in any way. That is the first plank of the legend to disappear. It is true that the principal shareholder of *The Times* is Major Astor, a brother of Lord Astor, who is an M.P. and as modest as he is patriotic. The policy of *The Times* is completely in the hands of its editor, Mr. Geoffrey Dawson, who is an absolute martinet.

By the wish of Major Astor, *The Times* can never again

be bought or sold, and a committee consisting of the Lord Chief Justice, the Archbishop of Canterbury and two or three others, will advise on its policy when the present controllers have passed away.

The only newspaper which Nancy and her husband own is the *Observer*, a very fine high-class Sunday journal with about 200,000 circulation. Unfortunately for the Astors, the *Observer* is being badly left behind by Lord Kemsley's *Sunday Times*. The *Sunday Times* is no relation to the daily *Times*. It appeals to the same public, but it has no connection with the firm on the other side of the street with the same name.

It will therefore be seen that Lord and Lady Astor command only one newspaper, and cannot compare with the giants of Fleet Street such as Lord Kemsley, Lord Camrose, Lord Rothermere, Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Southwood.

However, let us admit that Lady Astor desires to pull the strings behind the scenes. Put it higher than that if you like. Supposing she is determined to have the say in the appointment of Cabinet Ministers and the adoption of foreign policy? What are her weapons?

Her newspaper power is negligible. Her wealth is vast, but does any one suggest that Mr. Chamberlain is for sale?

Her influence in the House of Commons is slight. She is popular for her many kind deeds, but no one takes her seriously as a debater. Every one appreciates her vivacity and her unerring instinct in clothes, nor do they doubt her genuine solicitude for the poor. In spite of all these things the House wishes that, since she was the first woman to take her seat in Parliament, she would remain in it for more than ten minutes at a time and not move about as if the debating chamber were a Southern tea party.

There is, of course, her beautiful place in the country.



But there are hundreds of beautiful places in England.

Does the answer lie then in Lord Astor? What is he like, this Waldorf Astor of America who became a British peer? Lord Astor is good looking, with a beautiful speaking voice and a bearing that is both modest and dignified. He was in the House of Commons and a Minister when he succeeded to the title of his father, the first Viscount. It is said that Waldorf Astor wept with chagrin at having to go to the House of Lords and thus abandon hope of a real political career. That is not an uncommon phenomenon in British life. British society seems to be divided into those trying to join the peerage and those trying to escape it.

No. Lord Astor is not the type that aspires to rule behind the scenes. His interest in politics is intense, and he would have liked to have fought for the highest honours on the political battlefield, but he is neither an intriguer nor a dictator.

Therefore we must come back to Nancy. I do not doubt that she is an intriguer, nor that she would love to be a dictator. She has the right to be called a political hostess, inasmuch as her guests and her interests are largely political. That is not unusual. Politics get into the blood and dominate the minds of those inoculated with the germ.

Nor do I deny that Lord Halifax and Mr. Eden have both used the hospitality of the Astors for the purpose of having informal talks with representatives of foreign powers.

The Astors have made no secret of the fact that they believe that an understanding between Germany and Britain is essential to world peace. I must confess that I am of that opinion too.

Thus a German ambassador like Herr von Ribbentrop, feeling the hostility of the British nation which his tactless blunders did so much to create, finds a friendly refuge in the Astors' circle and a chance to discuss

Anglo-German difficulties away from the limitations of official formality.

I have no doubt that at such moments Lady Astor feels that she is directing destiny whereas she is really being an obliging hostess to those who find her pleasant and useful.

One more thing I must explain. *The Times* is still regarded as the official mouthpiece of the Foreign Office. As a newspaper it has the smallest, if the most valuable, circulation in London. Nevertheless *The Times* is still used as a medium of forecasting Government policy when the moment may not be quite ripe for a ministerial announcement.

Therefore the editor, Geoffrey Dawson, is also glad of frank informal talks which explain so much that cannot be published in the newspapers.

But here is the joke. At the very moment that American journalists were putting out the story of the great pro-German plot by the Astors and the *Times*, Herr Hitler expelled *The Times* correspondent from Berlin "for his mendacious and unbearable attacks upon the Nazi régime."

*The Times* retaliated by expressing its opinion of the expulsion in words of cold and calculated contempt.

So much then for Nancy Astor's usefulness as a political hostess.

Where does Mr. Chamberlain come in? What is it that makes him cringe before the Astor frown and fawn before the Astor smile?

He has never denied that he desires an Anglo-German *rapprochement* although he has equally never failed to show his determination to make Britain strong enough to meet any threat from Germany. He has warned Germany that if there is a war in Europe we shall be drawn in on the side of her enemies. In the fateful week-end of May 21st he threw the full weight of Britain against the war dreams of Hitler's extremists.

This is the abject surrender to Nazism which literary Brooklyn describes. This is the obeisance to the Astor decree.

If the Astors were consumed with a passionate hatred of Neville Chamberlain in what way could they injure him? Mr. Garvin's bow and arrow are their sole armaments and the arrow is sadly blunted.

Ah! But what about working against him behind the scenes? What about getting brother Astor's *Times* to open fire?

When the Tory *Times* tries to destroy a Tory Premier there will be two moons in the sky.

Well, there you are. I have told you the truth about the Cliveden set. And has it occurred to you that if the Astors were as powerful politically and journalistically as some people think this would be my last article and my last Parliament?

## *Crisis in Czechoslovakia*

IT IS impossible to cross the frontier into Czechoslovakia at this time without a quickening of the pulse.

From being a hybrid and ill-balanced offspring of the Treaty of Versailles it has now become the focus point of the grim drama of European events.

For three days I had been in Vienna, gazing at first hand upon the spectacle of a once great city and a once dominating nation being absorbed into the German Reich. It had been a strange experience.

Literally, Germany has placed in Austria an army of occupation. It is true that she has sent into Austria picked troops. They are young. They are good-looking, well behaved, and carry themselves on the streets in such a manner as to give no offence.

On the surface it might be nothing more than a military reunion in Vienna—one of the regimented festivals which the Teuton loves so much.

It is only when a lorry goes by in the streets with German soldiers on the look-out, or when a dispatch rider tears through the city at top speed that one is reminded that the German military machine is not there merely on a holiday.

At the entrance to the Parliament where years ago men gave expression to their thoughts there stand two helmeted sentries with rifle and bayonet.

Parliament, the forum of the people, is now the headquarters of Gauleiter Berckel, the German who to-day rules Austria.

I saw no German aeroplanes, but I did see hundreds of young German airmen strolling along the streets.

Driving up to the hills above Vienna I came upon a

concentration of fifty army lorries and tiny military cars—most of them camouflaged as in the last war.

There is no military ostentation; there is nothing to alarm the visitor or the Austrian. Let me repeat, because I think it important, that the young German soldiers carried themselves in a manner that would make any nation proud of them.

Yet, underneath it all, one senses the grip of this tremendous and incalculable military machine.

Therefore it is understandable that, as the train pulls out from the station at Vienna and eventually nears the Czechoslovakian frontier, the pulse beat quickens, and one wonders what kind of people they can be who stand with their little army in utter defiance of mighty Germany.

As we crossed the frontier some two or three hundred Czech peasants were in the station in festival dress. Ironically enough they were celebrating the anniversary of their freedom as a people.

They were not a romantic peasantry like some of the others in Europe. Their faces are rather heavy, their bodies more sturdy than graceful, the expression in their eyes is stolid.

Yet within three or four minutes I was to see a sight which will linger in memory for a long time.

A little way beyond the frontier there is a bridge over a small river. On that bridge stood a solitary Czech soldier—a boy of 16 or 17—in his ill-fitting khaki uniform and with a rifle and bayonet on his shoulder.

Behind him rolled the unbroken countryside. He was on guard, his face turned towards the German-Austrian frontier. The passengers on the express looked out of the windows and waved to him. His face lit up in a smile and he waved back.

Whatever the rights or the wrongs of the present trouble between Czechoslovakia and Germany may be that boy, that peasant's son in uniform, will always

be symbolic to me of the implacable bravery of the Czech people.

The direction of Czechoslovakian policy is centred, of course, in Prague, the capital. The problem that obsesses the Government lies to the North, two or three hours away in the Sudeten German district of the Republic.

I determined to see the problem first, and started off by car for Reichenberg, which is in the heart of the Sudeten district and only 25 miles or so from the actual German frontier.

It was impossible, of course, to approach this problem without some preconceived prejudices. From one end of Europe to the other it is the one subject of discussion, but I decided to go with as open a mind as possible and report to the *Daily Sketch* exactly what I saw and heard.

The first part of the drive from Prague is not particularly interesting. The country is flat and dull; the roads are straight, the villages without charm, the farm lands flat and without beauty.

It is one of the surprises of nature that the characteristics of a people and the landscape frequently go together. Thus as we reached the Sudeten country one became conscious of a changed atmosphere and setting.

The ranges of hills lent dignity and importance to the view, the roads began to wind as in England, the villages took on that element of cleanliness and charm which is reminiscent of Bavaria.

The physical type changes as well. The Germans are taller than the Czechs. In many cases their hair is fair, almost yellow, whereas the Czechs are brown and undistinctive. Again you find the light blue eyes which always seem such an anachronism on the Continent of dark-eyed races.

Reichenberg is a quaint industrial German town of some 20,000 people. The whole place was festooned

with Sudeten flags and endless pictures of Henlein, the political leader. Hitler's name is not allowed to be spoken nor can his picture be displayed, but the same Nazi technique is there.

It demands a leader, and Henlein is put up for every one to gaze upon, although the intention is obvious that he is there merely to represent the great leader in Germany.

We pulled up at a quaint German inn. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon and many young Germans and their girls were on the terrace having a cup of coffee or a glass of beer with the accompaniment of those abundant rich cakes which so delight the Teutonic eye and stomach.

It was a most admirable inn. Its service and appointments, its cooking and its comfort would be hard to duplicate in any town of its size in England.

The streets were full of people ambling up and down in order to gaze upon the decorations. There was an undercurrent of excitement, but not the slightest sign of terrorism or panic.

Here and there a young Czech policeman was stationed on duty and looked on calmly at the interesting human spectacle before him. In fact, there was nothing to distinguish it from any by-election scene in our own country except that the amount of money spent on party decorations would unseat any British candidate.

But there were strange adventures ahead.

At dinner that night the proprietor of the hotel came up to me, clicked his heels, and in broken English said:

"I wonder, sir, if you would permit a friend of mine who speaks excellent English to drive you around the town to-night in his motor car and see the fireworks. He is a young lawyer, and would be very happy to be of service."

Accordingly a young Sudeten lawyer of about 28 years

of age came to the hotel in an open car, and we started off to see the sights. He was a most gay and amusing companion.

He had the gift of laughter, which is one of the rarest things in Europe to-day. He had that eagerness of spirit which would make him an automatic Oxford Grouper if he lived in a country where that sect was allowed to flourish.

His belief in Hitler and his zeal for the Nazi cause had reached the point of fanaticism, yet there was no hatred in his heart—not even towards the Czechs. He was like some one who had seen a star and was irresistibly drawn towards it.

It was a miracle that no one was killed, because he drove at a tempestuous pace. Every few seconds he shot his right hand up to give the Nazi salute to some one. Our drive was not without moments of suspense.

The fireworks were simply the illuminations. In every window of "the faithful" lights were placed to show that they would vote to-morrow for the Henlein party. Where lights did not appear the assumption was that the residents were Czechs or Social Democrats (corresponding to our Liberal Party) or Communists.

Leaving the car by the roadside we walked together through the streets. Pointing to a narrow hotel my friend said, "That is the Communists' headquarters."

We looked up and just as we did a shower of leaflets were thrown from it. The passing Germans disdained even to pick them up, but I managed to secure two or three.

Obviously there is no law of libel in that part of the world. What those pamphlets said about Herr Henlein, his habits and his character and his honesty would earn a ten-year prison sentence in Britain.

"No true German is a Communist," said the young lawyer. He felt that his hospitality to me had been



contaminated by this vile exhibition of bad manners. To me it was all so absurdly like the Eatanswill election in *Pickwick Papers*.

It was nearly midnight when we returned to the hotel. The proprietor was waiting for us. He was obviously in a state of considerable excitement. Again clicking his heels, he said:

"A message, sir, from the party leaders. They would be glad if you would come to Herr Schmidt's coffee house and talk to them."

This was an opportunity not to be missed, so the young Herr Doctor (the title "Doctor" with Germans is of a singularly embracing character) turned his car about and we drove to the coffee house.

It was like any large tea-shop in England, full of people sipping their coffee or beer, and all of them gazing with fascinated eyes at a corner table where three local party leaders, dressed in a sort of chauffeur's uniform, were in heavy consultation.

They received us with formality and dignity. They had been informed that I was a member of the British Parliament, and with the German love of painting the lily or, as it is sometimes called in Germany, "Pouring chocolate sauce on a gold watch," they solemnly addressed me as "Herr Minister."

In return I addressed each one of them as "Gauleiter," which was like calling a captain "general."

Thus are the niceties preserved even in the cockpit of Europe.

They were in a state of cerebral exaltation. Tomorrow they would show to the world, and especially Herr Hitler, that the Sudeten Germans were united in their determination to throw off the yoke of Czech domination and to declare their souls to belong to Nazi-socialism.

After a long discussion the principal leader asked permission to put a serious question.

"If Hitler comes into this territory to protect us from persecution and violence, will England fight?"

That was the question, and they all leaned forward for an answer.

With a modest assurance that I was not in a position to speak for the British Government, I decided to fall back on Mr. Chamberlain's formula.

"Britain is not pledged to go to war to help Czechoslovakia."

There were loud exclamations of delight.

"At the same time you would not be justified in assuming that Britain would not fight for Czechoslovakia."

The sudden dejection of the group was almost ludicrous. Their shoulders sagged and their faces expressed something like despair.

"But why?" demanded the principal leader. "The whole of Czechoslovakia is not worth the blood of one Englishman."

Where this awkward conversation might have ended is difficult to say, but at that moment there came a melodramatic interruption—a messenger had brought a note.

The principal leader read it. His face flushed with fury and he struck the table a smashing blow with his fist.

"They have started shooting our people!" he cried.

One of the other leaders swore a terrific oath in German. A third one looked as if he were going to burst into tears. The people at the other tables whispered and muttered to each other. It was first-rate Lyceum melodrama.

"Now you see," said my young lawyer friend, "what is really happening."

The principal leader went to the telephone but came back almost immediately.

"I have called the Czech police headquarters," he said, "and there is no reply. It is impossible."

At that he sat down and another round of coffee was ordered. This seemed curious. No one has ever doubted the courage of the Germans if any trouble is going on, but I could not quite see what another cup of coffee had to do with it.

At last at the risk of outraging the hospitality of my hosts I suggested that we might go and investigate the shootings at first hand.

This did not meet with any particular enthusiasm, but eventually they concurred, and leaving the coffee house we started off in a cavalcade of three motor cars to see the Sudeten terrorism at its worst.

By that time it was one o'clock in the morning. The illuminations were no longer in the windows. The town was deserted, and on the countryside there was not a single light beyond the roads.

Here and there, however, we were stopped by villagers who told us that they had heard that atrocities were taking place a little way farther on.

When we got there some more villagers told us that atrocities were taking place a few miles back. The situation was becoming embarrassing.

Whoever had done the shooting it was always in some other place. Soon we encountered a group of about ten Czech policemen.

Nothing could exceed the calm behaviour of the Czech police. They were there to keep order, not to cause trouble, and no men ever carried out their orders more conscientiously.

But our quest was not without its success. Four or five villagers whom we questioned pointed down a lonely road. There we found a house in which the lights were still lit. We were met by the owner who let us inside. His wife was sitting in a chair in her bedroom as if she had seen a ghost. Then we saw the awful truth.

There was a broken window with glass on the floor. In the centre of the room was a small stone which had

done the mischief and on the opposite wall were spattered the entrails of a rotten egg.

We all gazed solemnly at the dreadful spectacle. I had a feeling that the broken glass and the egg would remain there for many days as a sort of shrine.

To be perfectly fair we found two other atrocities farther down the road. Another broken window and four boards missing from a fence.

Once more I was invited to look upon the broken glass and gaze upon the denuded fence.

But one of our party was a newspaper photographer with an eye to the main chance.

Outside the house he gathered together four of the tallest villagers, who were carrying stout sticks in their hands, posed them in front of the gate and, persuading them to brandish their sticks, he took a flashlight photograph of them standing on guard in front of the house they did not own and against an enemy which they could not see.

I have no doubt that that photograph will circle the globe with its stark realism, for, of course, the camera cannot lie.

And so to bed.

The atrocities had resolved themselves into two broken windows, but my good hosts were not finished with me.

The next day, Sunday, the voting was to take place, and nothing would make them happier than if I would accompany the principal leader in his car, see the polling booths, investigate the economic distress and go to the frontier where I could judge for myself the warlike preparations of the Czechs.

At 9 o'clock the next morning I started off with the young lawyer driving and the principal leader of the local Sudeten Germans sitting beside him in the front.

We bore the official standard of the Sudeten party and the leader wore his uniform.

Wherever we went men, women and children gave us the Nazi salute.

To each of the salutes the leader replied with a short raising of his arm, but my good friend the young lawyer brandished his right arm to the very skies. As his average speed was about 60 m.p.h. I was conscious of mixed emotions.

Across the countryside the polling booths were already crowded as if the people wanted to register as early as possible in the day their loyalty to the cause.

Then my guides showed me something which needed no exaggeration. Owing to the natural supply of water power the district around Reichenberg was once one of the most prosperous industrial sections in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

An immense number of factories had been maintained, and so prosperous were they that in the pride of ownership many of them were decorated and architecturally improved so as to look almost like modest palaces.

This part of Bohemia was not only well-to-do—it was rich. Now, however, factory after factory is closed and abandoned. Within five miles I must have seen fifteen of them.

Some of them were being demolished for the mere value of their bricks. It was a tragic sight. Allowing for the fact that my guides may have taken me to the worst section the mute pity of it all could not be denied.

“Our people were the best workers in Europe,” said the young German lawyer, “they were honest, efficient and capable. Now they are without work, without hope, and many of them are starving.

“The Government will not give these factories any of their orders for army equipment. The whole of our people become more wretched every day. Yet if Hitler came to-morrow every factory would start again and we would be prosperous.”

Never in all my experience have I seen people so child-

like in their faith. To them Hitler was a wizard, a god to whom world economic conditions presented no problems.

If he waved a wand factory chimneys would belch out smoke. If he raised a hand Europe would clamour for the goods of the Sudeten German.

Leaving the factory district we turned down a road that led to the frontier. We had been standing in the wings—now we were to step on to the stage of the Central European drama. Nor did it take long to sense the change in atmosphere.

Every two or three miles we encountered stone barricades drawn up on the roadway, leaving just enough space for a car to crawl by.

At each of these barricades were placed Czech sentries who watched the leader's car go by and never gave the slightest sign of disrespect or discourtesy.

At every bridge that we crossed there were deep holes dug on either side to facilitate their destruction by explosives. Here and there in the fields were machine-gun emplacements fully manned.

There was no movement of troops, no heavy concentration of them that we could see.

But unobtrusively, the Czechs were in position, waiting by day and night for the German invasion that might come.

The frontier itself is simply a quiet road with two barriers a few yards apart. On one side is Germany, on the other side Czechoslovakia. A couple of German officials were sitting in the sun; two Czech officials were leaning by their barrier listening to some one playing the piano very badly inside an adjoining house.

At night time, I am told, the officials of the two countries pass beer bottles to each other and gossip over the day's happenings.

With a sense of weariness over the madness of men, I said "Good-bye" to my Nazi friends, and getting into

my own car began the three-hour drive back to Prague.

Back to the imperturbable capital of the hybrid republic, to the city of unbelievable calm, to the skyline of the twin towers that seem to say to the incoming traveller: "Here you will find the enduring things that bring riches and tranquillity to the mind.

But something had happened to Prague. I found the place seething with excitement. It was six o'clock on a Sunday evening, yet hundreds of people were crowding around a loud-speaker microphone in which a voice in Czech was shouting stridently.

Motor cars equipped with wireless sets were stopped in the streets by people listening to the voice.

I jumped out and nosed my way into the crowd. What was it? I asked the question a dozen times until at last a man turned on me and shouted:

"Football! Czechoslovakia has scored one and Brazil nothing."

No wonder the gods laugh sometimes . . .

Next day I went to the Foreign Office and had a talk with Dr. Kamil Krofta, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He used to be a professor, and still looks more like one than a politician.

"There is hope," he said. "The Sudeten Germans are not lacking in men of good will among their leaders.

"We will go as far as we possibly can to give them the fullest measure of autonomy and liberty of action.

"We do not deny them their schools, their language or their customs, but on no account can we agree to a form of autonomy which would permit them to declare their determination to join the Reich.

"The Sudeten country is our natural frontier. Without it we could not defend ourselves for any time at all. With it an enemy would find us a second Verdun. In fairness let me say, too, that among the leaders of Germany there are also men of good will."

I put to him a question that is in many minds. Supposing Germany made no military move against them, but decided to crush them economically?

"We have to face that probability," said the Foreign Minister, "but already the U.S.A. have shown great sympathy with our situation and are opening up channels of trade for us that will give us life even if Germany should decide to boycott our goods."

I asked him what would happen if Germany did enter the Sudeten country on the pretext, genuine or otherwise, of protecting the safety of the Germanic people there.

"We would fight," said Dr. Krofta. "France will stand by us, Russia will send help, and we do not believe that England would be indifferent. Our people are absolutely firm in their resolution, our army is first rate and they would fight to the last man."

This was not said in a bellicose manner at all. Rather it was in the voice of a man who sees reality. He did not deny that there had been mistakes and possibly injustices in the treatment of the Czech minorities.

On the other hand he showed that it is not easy to deal with a powerful minority which has surrendered its very soul to the political creed of another nation.

That is why no Sudeten German is allowed to fly an aeroplane. That is why no Sudeten factory is given armament orders. The Czechs say that they cannot trust their Germanic co-citizens.

That afternoon we took the train for Germany.

At Egar I was able to purchase a German newspaper. On its front page I read these words:

"In spite of an election carried out in a forest of bayonets, in spite of the most brutal terrorism and baton charges by the Czech police, the Sudeten Germans were able to register yesterday a 90 per cent vote to show their loyalty to the principles of Nazi Socialism."



Then followed a long and hysterical description of the atrocities.

I stretched out on a seat and went to sleep. There are times when the absurdity of the Europe of to-day can only be borne by the merciful obliteration of slumber.

What is the truth about the famous week-end of May 21 when the world seemed on the brink of another war? This is the story as given me by a representative of the Czechoslovakian Government.

On the Friday morning of May 20 the French and Czechoslovakian Secret Services sent word that the Germans were manoeuvring troops towards the frontier.

The plan of the German General Staff was to send into the Sudeten country a comparatively small force.

This small force was not to fire a shot unless attacked but to declare that it had come in purely to protect the lives of the Sudeten Germans during the election.

It was the belief of the German Government that they would create a situation without bloodshed which would put the Czechs in a very awkward position.

In other words it would be the Czechs who would have to make the unenviable decision to make war.

On receipt of this information from the secret service the Czech Government issued an order for the army to mobilise and to take up defence positions.

The two measures were carried out between eight o'clock on Friday night and three o'clock on Saturday morning. The whole thing was done two hours ahead of schedule. When dawn broke they were in position.

The rest of what happened on that Saturday is common knowledge.

It is impossible to say whether the story of the German plan is true or not. The Czechs do not doubt its authenticity. On the other hand, neutral military observers declare that at no time did the Germans move divisions in the direction described.

It is all an immense diplomatic and political puzzle.

But perhaps it was for the best. I came away from Czechoslovakia with the feeling that the events of May 21, whether justified or not by the facts of the situation, definitely lessened the chance of any big war in Europe.

I agree that the situation is still so tense that at any moment words of optimism may be rendered foolish. At the same time the Czechs have introduced an undeniable factor which is exerting profound influence on the course of events.

Hitherto Herr Hitler in all his famous Saturday afternoon experiments has taken a gamble based on the hesitation of the Allies. In this case there is no gamble.

The Czechs simply say: "We fight." What is more, they will fight, even if no other nation should raise a hand to help them. It took them hundreds of years to acquire their freedom, and they will not have it taken from them again until the last man is dead.

What will be the outcome of it all? That depends on the patience of Hitler, the fairmindedness of the Czechs, the common sense of the Sudeten Germans, and the influence of Great Britain.

Czechoslovakia can never be a nation as that word is understood. It is supremely an experiment in human liberty which has not yet proved successful.

Yet the fact that it is an experiment in liberty makes it imperative that it must not be destroyed on the mere plea of nationalist emotions.

The idea of Czechoslovakia is greater than the Republic itself.

In the meantime, unconcerned by these academic considerations, the young Czech soldier stands on guard at the bridge just inside the frontier.

His name may not be Horatius, but the spirit is the same.

## *Vienna's Morning after Hitler*

THE DANUBE is an important and beautiful river. It flows through Central Europe like a stream of destiny. It binds nations together that would be happier if an ocean separated them. It serves Slav, Teuton and Hungarian alike. It plays no favourites and has no prejudices.

But it is *not* blue. Never has there been any river (unless it be the Mississippi) that is more persistently a yellowish grey.

It was the Viennese who decided that the Danube was blue because they are a romantic, sensitive people who have always preferred to live in a world of their own imaginings.

Vienna is a jewel set in the foothills surrounded by magic woods. The sun is golden, the summer air is intoxicating. The very peasants that live in the region of its graciousness talk with voices like poets.

Vienna has charm, wit, grace and sensibility.

The only thing that it lacks is—character. That is why the Swastika flies to-day over the Guildhall and the portrait of Adolf Hitler gazes with sad, smouldering eyes from a thousand shop windows.

When I went into Austria on this trip I wondered what I should discover. The Austrians unquestionably belong to the Germanic race. Yet the Northern and Southern Irishmen are not more dissimilar in temperament than the Austrians and the Germans.

Germany as a unified Reich is young and has the aggressiveness of youth. All things are possible to a nation that has no memories older than its oldest inhabitant.

Austria, on the other hand, is weary with memories. They cluster about her feet like the leaves from a tree

that is stricken with frost or petals from yesterday's roses.

I walked with an Austrian to that amazing section of Vienna where rows and rows of modern workmen's flats were erected by the Socialists in the early years of the post-war period.

"That was the birth of a great idea," he said. "But when Dollfuss put down the Socialist rising he ordered the artillery to fire on these flats. He might have made peace with the Socialists, but he preferred the iron hand instead.

"The trouble with us is that we don't believe in anything. We didn't believe in this scheme for better housing. But when the artillery were ordered to fire on the flats during the civil war they didn't believe in destroying them.

"They aimed at the tops of the flats so as not to kill more people than they could help and also not to knock the flats about too much.

"That is why Hitler was inevitable. A nation that won't either be autocratic or democratic must go down."

That night I talked to a supporter of the Austrian Nazis. "We are bored," he said, "beautifully bored. Did you ever get drunk and think you were Napoleon—and wake up the next morning to find that you were a solicitor's clerk or a piano-tuner?

"We had such a beautiful debauch when the Germans marched in. We shouted 'Heil Hitler' until our bellies ached and our throats were parched.

"No woman ever lost her head on a moonlit night more completely than we did. Now it is the day after. It is a charming joke, isn't it?"

I suggested to him that I might be seeing Herr Seyss-Inquart, the Austrian Nazi who superseded Dr. Schuschnigg, and was responsible for inviting the German army to cross the border.

"He is dead," said my companion. "He died in giving birth to the Anschluss. The Germans don't bother with him and the Austrians won't speak to him."

In the streets there were hundreds of young German soldiers strolling about in the unexpected excitement of seeing some country other than their own. They were magnificent specimens of humanity.

Their clear blue eyes looked straight into the future without fear. They were part of a great adventure. They were seeing the dream of their leader come true, the union of the German peoples of Europe under the slogan: "One Race, one State, one Leader."

This is the new army that has sprung from the loins of Germany's National Socialism.

It has little relation to the goose-stepping regiments that passed the ex-Kaiser in review in such an endless torrent that his mind gave way and he thought he could conquer the earth. This new army is youth in uniform. It is taught to glory not in conquest but in sacrifice.

Hitler has lit a flame in the breasts of his young men. He has set alight the idealism that was hidden by the cynicism of the post-war years. This Nazi movement both enslaves and frees the soul. That is a paradox that cannot be denied.

It is puritanical yet mystic. Perhaps Cromwell's army was like that.

"Hitler's Germany," said my Austrian companion, "has the strength of a giant, the soul of a frustrated woman and the intelligence of a child. We are beautifully bored."

Vienna dozed in the sun. A little shabby, too many soldiers, an absurd display of Swastikas but, to the eye, much the same Vienna as at any time during the last ten years.

But there were sinister rumours that came like whisperings in the dark. Vienna is bored, but underneath

is a terrible fear of the unknown. They told me that Schuschnigg was dead. They told me dreadful brutalities that horrified and sickened one.

At last I went to see Dr. Neubacher, the Burgomaster, the man who had practically founded the Anschluss party and had been imprisoned by Dr. Schuschnigg.

Dr. Neubacher is a man of genuine charm. His twinkling eyes and courteous manner warm one to him at the very first meeting. I asked him where Dr. Schuschnigg was.

"He is in Vienna."

"Is he still at the Belvedere Palace?"

"No."

"I am told that he is at the Metropole Hotel, which, I believe, is the headquarters of the Secret Police. Is that true?"

"It is possible. But he is in a private room."

"Has his marriage taken place?"

"No."

"Will he be tried for treason?"

"That is for Berlin to decide."

In those six words "That is for Berlin to decide" is the truth about the Anschluss. This is not a union of two countries, it is a conquest.

Germany's army in Austria is an army of occupation. The fact that the guns did not go off does not alter the basic facts. To-day the Germans rule Austria. What is more, they do it in the German fashion of having one man at the top.

Seyss-Inquart and other Austrian Nazi leaders may turn up on the gala night at the Opera, but the man in charge is Reich Commissioner Buerckel, the strong man from Berlin.

No wonder the German Government repudiated Austria's debts. Since when does a conqueror pay interest on loans to the defeated?

Later that day I sought the truth about the surrender

of Schuschnigg. It appears the the Austrian army was ready to resist the German invasion.

Schuschnigg toyed with the idea and then threw in his hand. The army which was waiting was told to offer no obstruction to the incoming troops.

I am one of those who believe that Herr Hitler does not want war. In assessing his character, however, one must realise how often he has been willing to risk war in what the diplomats call "Hitler's pleasant Saturday matinees."

That night with some friends I dined at one of Vienna's fashionable hotels. It was drearily empty, a fact that was stupidly accentuated by endless waiters standing at tables that could not possibly be taken.

Tourists are staying away, the Viennese are too poor and the Jews . . . That needs no explaining.

The orchestra leader seized his violin. Here were British visitors who must be treated according to plan.

*Da-da-da-dee DUM pum PUM pum PUM da-da-da-dee DUM pum PUM pum PUM.*

You cannot escape "The Blue Danube" in Vienna even if it is a yellowish grey.

Then we had "Wien, Wien, mein liebes Wien!" that Tauber has made so familiar to our ears. After that we had "The Waltze" from "*Rosenkavalier*."

The waiters looked lugubrious. One of our party bowed to the orchestral conductor out of pity for his lack of audience. It was a mistake. We had "The Blue Danube—so blue so blue" all over again.

My last memory of Vienna was just before I took the train to Bucharest. I went to see Beethoven's house. It stands just as it was in a courtyard. Vines drooped from its balcony and the spinet is still there in the room where he wrote "Eroica." Perhaps the soul of Vienna will find sanctuary there.

Will Hitler succeed in absorbing Austria? It will be difficult. The countryside will not be difficult, but

Vienna will play an opportunist game. Since the war she has become a political wanton, and it is not in her nature to be faithful to one lover.

If the European tide goes against Hitler there will almost certainly be a separatist movement in Austria. In any event, that is bound to come in some form, however sporadic.

Hitler's real chance is to succeed in the direction where Dollfuss and Schuschnigg failed. They remained at war with the Socialists. They failed to make friends with the Left.

Hitler is shrewd. He is a brilliant politician. I think he will bind the workers and peasants to him. If that happens Austria is part of Germany for a generation at least—perhaps for ever.

If he gains the peasants he need not care about the poets.



## *Rumanian Rhapsody*

Q. Where is Rumania?

A. Oh, somewhere in the Balkans.

Q. What do you know about Rumanian resources?

A. It has oil.

Q. Name any famous living Rumanians?

A. King Carol and Madame Lupescu.

Q. What do you know of the history of Rumania?

A. They came in on our side of the war and got rolled up like a carpet by the Germans.

Q. Is Rumania of any special importance now, politically?

A. Shouldn't think so.

I put it to my readers in the *Daily Sketch* that those questions and answers represent pretty well the average Englishman's knowledge and impressions of Rumania.

Therefore, as our train made its way in the early morning through the Rumanian countryside towards Bucharest, I felt the quickening of interest that always comes with the discovery of a new country.

A hot sun beat upon the fields which were riotous with colour. The soil of Rumania is voluptuous and abundant. It begrudges nothing to its suitors.

At Siniai, a station some three hours or so from the capital, there was a charming interruption. A good-looking young man, speaking perfect English, came on board to meet me.

He was a Foreign Office official assigned for special duty to the Propaganda Ministry. His name was Paul Zanesco.

M. Zanesco thought that I might prefer to motor to Bucharest. The road would take us through the moun-

tains, we could lunch at the yacht club and reach Bucharest in time for a siesta.

The purpose was quite obvious. The Rumanian Legation in London had reported my impending visit as a matter of routine and the Propaganda Ministry was out to do a good job with a visiting British journalist and politician.

I wonder when Britain will wake up to the necessity of some such department. It would pay for itself a thousand times over.

At any rate Paul and I (we are, of course, old friends now) started our mountain drive. We had gone only a little way when the clouds gathered and a violent thunderstorm broke.

The rain was torrential and rebounded inches from the road. I suggested that we might put in somewhere until its violence abated.

"Let us go to the King's summer palace," said Paul. "I have a permit to enter."

We swung off to a side road. A sentry challenged us, then waved us on. A moment later we came upon a palace that was straight from the pages of fiction.

We have all laughed at the mock seriousness of *The Prisoner of Zenda* and have dismissed it as a quaint yarn of an imaginary Ruritania. This summer palace of King Carol could only be found in Ruritania. Its loveliness, its mountain setting, its turrets and balconies, its silent sentries . . . Here was romance for the asking.

As the doors were unbolted for us a flash of lightning seemed to strike at the palace like a fiery knife.

A deafening peal of thunder came on top of it that rolled and reverberated from one mountain to the other until it sounded like an artillery battle between four armies.

With our guide we made our way from room to room in the deserted palace, saw endless paintings of great value, gazed down from the balconies until driven

back by the lightning and the rain, and half expected that at any moment Rupert of Hentzau might appear and ask us what our business was.

An hour later we were out of the mountains and on a road where there had not been a drop of rain. It was excessively hot as we sped along past gipsy caravans, peasants with their oxen-driven carts and the endless sight of women working in the fields.

Except for the magnificent road, which goes on for hundreds of miles, life was as it was a thousand years ago.

Bucharest is Europe's most amazing capital—part Paris, part Orient, part American Middle West, part mining town, part Morocco. It is the "Boom Town" of Central Europe.

New buildings are going up everywhere. It is all so fresh that Bucharest might have been begun last year. If antiquity plays any part it is not visible to the eye.

This is a city from the new world dropped into the very heart of the old.

But if Bucharest cannot make up its mind whether it is Oriental, Occidental or accidental, the women have no such doubts about themselves.

Their smartness has no parallel in Europe. After the drab appearance of the women of Germany and Austria, where the feminine is completely submerged in the female, it is stimulating to find the Latin women of Rumania as chic and as smart as the women of Paris used to be in the days gone by.

The Rumanians, as befits a people descended from a Roman Legion, have fine features and slim bodies. They have charm, beautiful manners, wit, the gift of tongues and elegance.

Perhaps it is the very profusion of these gifts that has given them the reputation of lack of stability.

Among the aristocracy there is a fairly rigid code of morals as in the old county families of England, but the newly-formed middle classes and the wealthier set

indulge in divorces with a frequency which would be an embarrassment to any other people.

Therefore it seemed fitting that when King Ferdinand died the heir should be a romantic "playboy" who chose the fascination of a lady's eyes instead of his throne.

Carol and Madame Lupescu. They filled countless pages of the newspapers, and no one ever asked what was really going on in the country they pictured as Ruritania.

Yet Rumania was struggling through a fierce political upheaval. While Bucharest danced in the soft summer evening air the repercussions of events in other countries were being felt.

The peasants did not own their land. They were tenants of rich landlords, and the basic pride of ownership, the strongest instinct in the peasant, was at work.

They formed a political party and fought their case vehemently. The Liberals, as usual, tried to steer a middle course. One politician after another flirted with the idea of dictatorship.

Then Carol returned. That was eight years ago this month. The politicians determined that he would be no more than a titular king. He had been in the wilderness and could not expect the same rights as a king who had never strayed from the path of royalty.

Carol watched. He did not force his hand, but gradually his influence grew stronger and stronger. The peasants had won their fight before his return. They were given the ownership of their land while the landlords, with shrunken estates, were given bonds with interest payable per annum or perhaps.

Then Hitler's shadow appeared in Europe. It fell athwart Rumania, and under the inspiration of Germany an organisation called the "Iron Guard" was formed. It was the Rumanian version of the Brown Shirts.

The Iron Guard raised the cry of "Down with the Jews."

Another section of Parliament called "The Christian Party" adopted the same slogan.

The Liberals were more concerned with keeping the King in check than anything else. The peasants were demanding a better standard of living (and rightly so).

Then one day the Rumanian Premier, M. Duca, got off the train at Siniai and was foully murdered by members of the Iron Guard. Rumania was horrified.

Scandal and corruption there had always been, but never political assassination. Bucharest stopped dancing and talked of only one thing.

Carol waited. His patience had seemed inexhaustible, but the man whom the world had dubbed a playboy was measuring his antagonists.

The Iron Guard grew arrogant. Money was pouring in from outside sources for them. Hitler's "Saturday matinees" were forcing a new issue on Rumania.

"Are you for Germany or against her?"

The politicians could not dodge the question though they wriggled hard.

The Government fell. The Iron Guard should have been asked to form a Government, but Carol, at last showing his hand, passed them over and asked the Christian Party with their policy of anti-Semitism, to take over the reins.

There was a cry of rage from the Jews. From every side Rumania was attacked and condemned. Russia threatened to break off relations. Rumania faced a political crisis and a financial boycott.

The Iron Guard knew their moment had come. They prepared their plans—and they were plans of terrorism and violence.

With their strong hands they would wrest the power from the faltering grip of the politicians. Another Fascist state would be created with or without a puppet King on sufferance.

Then the "playboy King" struck. He had timed the

whole thing like a master. The Hohenzollern Prince, whom the world had mocked, acted with the strength and the swiftness of a Bismarck.

Bucharest seethed with rumour and excitement.

Then it was over. Parliament had been abolished. The Iron Guard had been disbanded and its leaders were in prison.

Carol, the most astute politician in Eastern Europe, was dictator of Rumania.

It was therefore with much pleasure that I had word that he would receive me at the Palace.

The palace of King Carol in Bucharest is not large, nor is it cluttered up with the impedimenta of many reigns like Buckingham Palace.

It is light, airy and elegant. The walls are cream coloured, the livery of the servants is of light satin, and the floors shine like a virtuous deed.

A germ, even with Communist tendencies, would be ashamed to be found in such an antiseptic palace.

Here and there an old master on the walls gives the incongruous effect of yesterday intruding on to-morrow.

King Carol has a passion for paintings and a shrewd sense of their value.

One immense painting, by an Italian master of the seventeenth century, showed Hercules in mortal combat with a centaur, while a female looked on with a mild interest in the proceedings.

I wonder if Carol saw himself as Hercules in that picture with Rumanian politics as the centaur . . .

"His Majesty will receive you."

I was taken by an equerry to a lift and transplanted to another spotless floor—and so to the presence of the King.

Carol rose to shake hands, and in a moment he was interviewing me with a thoroughness which suggests that he might have been a king of journalism if he had not become King of Rumania.

In spite of the fact that I had been close to him on three occasions during my visit, his personality was full of surprises.

His eyes are surprisingly light, and have the glitter of a crusader or a poet.

His voice is definitely Teutonic, which is perhaps not unnatural since he is a Hohenzollern.

Here was a man obviously being driven by forces from within that dominate his thoughts and his actions.

"Have you enjoyed your visit?" he asked.

"Yes, your Majesty, but I find myself fatigued."

"I am sorry. Why is that?"

"Because I have followed your Majesty about during the last three days during the celebrations of your return to Rumania eight years ago."

In essence, that was the kind of flattery that is due to a king, but actually there was much truth in it.

On the first day of the celebrations I saw him stand for an hour in the heat while the leaders of the Strajerii (a youth movement of boys and girls somewhat like our scouts) made speeches, sang songs and received the blessings of their king and the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church.

After that he presented flags to about 400 unit leaders and shook hands with each of them.

The next morning, at 10 o'clock, he reviewed 20,000 girls and boys in their neat white and blue uniforms.

The ceremony was to take about three hours (in Rumania a ceremony *is* a ceremony), involving the heads of the Church, the schools and the State.

The King, dressed in the same uniform as the children, took up his position with his serious-looking six-foot son, Michael, in attendance as usual.

There were trumpet calls, prayers, responses of a haunting beauty by a choir—and then the rain began.

Carol did not move. In Rumania it either rains or it doesn't. There are no half measures in that climate.

In his blue shorts and bare head the King received such a drenching as would have made the mad King Ludwig of Bavaria jealous. No one offered him any covering.

Like good King Wenceslas he insisted on sharing the sorrows as well as the joys of his subjects.

Not being a Rumanian I sought shelter and watched as a coward from underneath the grandstand.

On and on went the ceremony, while the King and his thousands of boys and girls became so soaked that their clothes hung like rags.

Carol made a sign. The younger children moved off quietly in perfect order.

I learned later that he gave instructions for them to be taken to the nearest hospital, where they were to be rubbed with alcohol to prevent chills.

The poor priests continued the service. Another detachment moved off.

Like the captain of a ship, the King remained to the last.

Then, with a gesture he brought it all to an end.

"So as not to disappoint the younger children," he said, "we shall have their part over again to-morrow morning."

Not to be outdone, I went again the following day, and saw the King arrive with his eager smile and joyous salutes to the entranced children, who seemed none the worse for the ducking or the applied alcohol of the day before.

"Carol is a superb actor," I ruminated. "Any one would think he was enjoying this."

It was not till later that I realised that this youth movement is now the one overwhelming passion of his life.

In fact, for more than ten minutes the King poured out to me his dreams and plans for raising the educational standards of youth, of teaching them good citizenship,



of bringing the cultural level of the peasant and the town children to a closer level.

"But it must not be political," he said. "I will not have the youth of Rumania made the tool of any political party or politician."

"Speaking of politics," I said, "was your suppression of the Iron Guard (the Rumanian Fascist movement) a popular move?"

He smiled. "It was not unpopular," he said, "and shall I say that it was not particularly popular. But it had to be."

"You don't feel that by sending their leader to prison for ten years you are creating a martyr who will be a great man when he is released?"

Carol made a gesture of disgust.

"That man!" he said. "He is not even second rate. He is fourth, fifth rate!"

The guttural quality of his voice became more pronounced. So must the ex-Kaiser have spoken many times of the puny Socialists who dared to oppose him in the days when he was the All Highest.

Gradually our conversation turned to the inevitable subject—Germany.

"I am neither pro-German nor anti-German," said the King. "There is much about them that I admire.

"They are excellent business men, and always have been. Even before the war it was Germany that was always penetrating European countries with her goods and her loans.

"She was both the industrialist and the banker, even if much of the money she loaned came from you people in England."

"Don't you find that German material is often poor now because of the substitutes they are forced to use?"

The King shook his head. "That is all part of the immense anti-German propaganda that is being spread everywhere," he said.

Then for ten minutes he told me an amazing story of Germany's penetration of the Danubian countries. He made no complaint, but showed a brilliant and comprehensive grasp of the whole matter.

Germany is broker, exporter and importer to Central Europe. She buys and pays with clearance Reichsmarks that are only negotiable in Germany.

She purchases and resells to other countries to secure foreign exchange. Her terms are generous—amazingly generous for a nation supposed to be in a difficult economic position.

She supplies new machinery at subsidised prices and takes shares in the undertaking in lieu of payment. She floods the Balkan States with catalogues.

In fact, Germany which is supposed to be obsessed with thoughts of war and nothing but war, is concentrating furiously on the economic domination of the small nations that adjoin her territory.

"Does England care?" asked the King abruptly. "I know that the Englishman's instinct is to think from London to Calcutta and not to consider what lies between.

"But one day he may find that something has happened on the line and that he cannot get to Calcutta."

That was what I had heard from all the leading men in Rumania. Did it matter to England if the economic hegemony of Central Europe passed into German hands?

"England might regard trade with Rumania as a small part of her rearmament programme," was the way one man put it to me.

The interview with the King was nearing an end. There was one question which I asked leave to put to him. When would he give back Parliamentary government to his country?

"That will not be long," said Carol, "but it will not be Parliament as we had it before.

"I am finished for ever with professional politicians.

We must instead have deputies who really represent something more than themselves.

"That is why our new constitution calls for members of Parliament to be elected from three sections of the community. The first is 'peasants and workers.'

"I have combined them in one group because the steadiness of the peasants will restrain any Communistic tendencies of the workers.

"The next section is 'Finance and Industry.' That needs no explaining. The last section is 'The Intellectuals.'

"It I agree, sounds vague, but is really comprehensive and important. No man shall be a candidate unless he is actually a practising member of one of those groups of society.

"I won't have a lawyer unless he has been dealing with briefs right up to his nomination, or a peasant unless he comes genuinely from the land. I am determined to break the grip of the professional politician."

If war should come Rumania would again side with Britain if she were free. That, too, may not be important, but we should remember that through Rumania is Russia's road to Europe.

Some day we may want that road opened. Some day we may want it closed.

Is it worth our while to keep our hands on the gates?

But these are questions which Mr. Chamberlain must decide. They are far-reaching and must be considered in the cold hour of the dawn when emotion has died like a candle and the grey light of pure reason appears.

I saw many strange and heartbreaking things on this trip through Central Europe. Already the picture of sad, disillusioned Vienna is fading like a picture on the screen when the lights go on.

The struggle of the Sudeten Germans and the epic bravery of the Czechs already seem to belong to the past.

But the memory of Carol—the playboy who became

king and father of his people—standing in the midst of the children who will be the citizens of to-morrow, stands out clear and alive.

The armies are standing to, but youth is on the march in many countries. They are going forward with hope . . .

Europe may yet be saved by the children to whom she has given birth.

## *A Messenger from Berlin*

LORD HALIFAX lives in Eaton Square which is five minutes from Buckingham Palace and three minutes from Sloane Square. It is an historic neighbourhood. True it is not as fashionable as its near neighbour Belgrave Square but it is more important. Lord Baldwin lives there and it has been known for Lord Halifax and the former Premier to meet by accident and talk things over like good neighbours.

The late Sir Henry Wilson also had a house in Eaton Place, just round the corner. One day during the Sinn Fein trouble when he arrived home from an unveiling of a war memorial he was assassinated by two Irishmen who shot him as he was going up his steps. Then they started in the direction of Sloane Square. Brandishing revolvers in both hands they reached an intercession and were held up by a policeman who was, of course, unarmed. They shot him in the stomach, whereupon a milkman brought one of them down with a milk bottle and a labourer got the other one with a shovel. The British don't like assassins or gunmen.

I assure you that the memories of Eaton Square are many and varied. And now I propose to add one more to them because I believe it is even more important than the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson.

On the morning before the King and Queen were to leave for their great reception in Paris, a dapper, middle-aged man called at the home of Lord Halifax.

"I have come to see Lord Halifax by appointment," said the visitor who spoke with a German accent.

"What name, Sir?" said the butler.

"Captain Wiedemann."

"Oh, yes, Sir. His Lordship is expecting you."

That is dialogue innocuous for the most tepid tea-tray comedy in London, but the contemporary historian should leave nothing out in reproducing the events of the moment. His successor, the ultimate historian, can make such deletions as the knowledge of after events may dictate.

However, we have now established these facts—that a German called at Lord Halifax's home in Eaton Square, that he was expected, and that he was admitted to the presence of the Foreign Secretary.

But why not at the Foreign Office? It was only ten minutes away, and Lord Halifax would have had his lieutenants by him as well as the majestic background of the building itself.

There was a reason. Captain Wiedemann is A.D.C. to Herr Hitler [twenty years ago Corporal Hitler ran messages for Captain Wiedemann]. Herr Hitler at a few hours' notice had asked for a private interview on his behalf with the British Foreign Secretary. Lord Halifax acceded to the invitation in spirit as well as fact by receiving him at his private house.

Now I propose that we reconstruct the scene in Lord Halifax's library. We may be wrong in occasional detail or dialogue, but from the ascertainable facts this is pretty well what happened.

We can dispense with the clicking of heels, the bowing and the offering of cigarettes. We shall not even linger over the expressions of mutual regard which are always a prelude to diplomatic conversations when relations between countries are strained.

"I have a message for Your Excellency from Herr Hitler."

"I shall be glad to read it."

"My apologies, Your Excellency, but it is not a written message. Herr Hitler asked me to convey it to you by word of mouth. You will no doubt appreciate that on many occasions I have acted as the Leader's confidential

emissary where written documents would be—shall we say—unnecessary.”

At this Lord Halifax no doubt took his glasses off and examined his visitor with his half sad, half humorous eyes. Then he would place the glasses as a sign that he agreed in spirit to the nature of the proposition.

“I would be glad to hear the message,” said Lord Halifax. The Herr Captain bowed.

“It is this. The Leader was anxious that you should receive it before you left for Paris with Their Majesties. Naturally you will be discussing affairs with the French Government, and Herr Hitler felt that he should communicate with you in advance of these talks. First he desires you to convey to the British Government an expression of good will and to ask them to believe that he, the Leader of 70 million Germans, sincerely wishes the relations of the two countries to be improved. He is not at all satisfied with the relations as they are and believes, himself, that a real and lasting improvement is by no means an impossible task.”

The Foreign Secretary held up his hand.

“If you will forgive me, Captain Wiedemann, I just want to make a note or two in order to convey to my colleagues in the Cabinet the exact purport of His Excellency’s message. You have no doubt found, like myself, that memory plays strange tricks.”

With his one good hand Lord Halifax would then adjust his glasses, turn to his pad, and with no undue hurry finish his annotations. When he was through he would turn his long face towards his guest. “Was there any further communication?”

“Yes, Your Excellency. The Leader asked me to say that in his opinion there are no fundamental differences that need separate our two peoples. Everything is capable of arrangement.”

“Even Czechoslovakia?”

“As regards Czechoslovakia the Leader asks me to

assure your Government that he is anxious for a peaceful solution of the Sudeten German trouble. He is disappointed at the lack of progress so far. Even so Herr Hitler is convinced that with good will on both sides a working arrangement can be reached. . . . And by the way, Your Excellency, the Leader might be interested in an air pact, if you would care to consider the question."

"Is that the end of His Excellency's message?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. That is all."

Nothing is more certain than at that moment Lord Halifax turned to his notes and carefully added the latest items to them. He never hurries to express an opinion, knowing that a little delay adds meaning to words and depth to actions.

Then off would come his glasses and he no doubt waved them hypnotically towards the A.D.C. "I hope you will convey to Herr Hitler my gratitude for his message. Particularly do I welcome the renewed assurance that, as Germany sees it, there are no fundamental differences between the two nations. In accepting most gladly that assurance I would suggest, however, that there is one matter in which the German Government's will for co-operation might be shown."

"What is that, Your Excellency? I am sure the Leader would be most interested to have your suggestion."

Lord Halifax pondered for a moment. "I refer particularly to the problem of refugees from Germany," he said firmly.

Here I am at a loss to reconstruct the scene. What did Herr Wiedemann say? My guess is that he said nothing. But Lord Halifax was not to be deterred by silence.

"An arrangement has been evolved among several Governments," he said. "It would be made infinitely more practical if Germany took her share in the work."

Captain Wiedemann bowed and clicked his heels. The interview was over. No doubt Lord Halifax offered him his car or a taxicab and no doubt the young German



declined on the plea that he was on his way to the German Embassy which was only a few minutes away and that he would walk. At any rate if you had hung around long enough you would have seen Lord Halifax come out and order his car to drive to "No. 10."

And there my power of reconstruction comes to an end. I do not propose to invade the holy of holies in Downing Street. But you may rest assured that the details supplied were pretty well on the lines which I have indicated.

Now what does it all mean? Is it bluff? Is it just playing for time? Is it sincere? Is it really important?

To my mind it is most significant and important although not altogether surprising. Events in Germany have a habit of casting shadows before them. A week before Captain Wiedemann's visit to London there had appeared a remarkably frank article in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* written by its editor, Dr. Silex. Now in Germany, editors do not express their own thoughts unless they coincide to a remarkable degree with those of the Government.

Therefore we must assume that Dr. Silex was flying a kite when he wrote this article under the heading, "Nothing in Common but Fear?" These were his main points:

1. Everything depends on the relationship of Britain and Germany.
2. Germany cannot be a useful ally to Britain as long as she is threatened on multiple fronts.
3. Unfortunately every move Germany makes to render herself secure is regarded by Britain as a threat.
4. Britain needs a peaceful Europe to develop her own overseas interests. The crux of the tragic conflict is that Britain does not seem to realise the necessity of a powerful Germany in the heart of Europe to maintain peace.

*Then comes the interesting climax to the article.*

5. If Britain will not support Germany's position in Europe it can hardly be expected that Germany will continue to support Britain's overseas policy.

No one could take exception to anything in the article by Dr. Silex—not even the threat at the end which says quite clearly that if Britain opposes Germany in Europe, Germany will begin to oppose Britain overseas.

The similarity between the article in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and the message brought by Hitler's A.D.C. to Lord Halifax is most striking. Germany is definitely out to make a deal with Britain. That is as clear as daylight.

Is it time then for us to throw our hats in the air and cheer ourselves hoarse at the prospect of a new era of peace and international confidence? I think we should go so far as to take our hats off but keep them in our hands. We may need them again if it rains.

It is dangerous to prophesy with so much dynamite lying loose, but the chances of a major war have receded enormously. Contrast the frenzy and fury of Hitler's speech on the day of Eden's resignation (and his cynical disregard of world opinion when he marched into Austria) with the tone of his latest message to Halifax. The transformation is almost unbelievable. Nor do I doubt his sincerity.

I ventured the opinion when Hitler invaded Austria that it would mark the farthest point of his progress and that we should begin to witness the decline of the dictatorships.

The crucial test of that theory came during the famous week-end of May 21. Hitler could not face the mobilisation of the Czech army, the firmness of Britain and France and the knowledge that world opinion was arraigned solidly against him.

The ghost of Austria rose to prevent him. His long series of "surprises" were at an end. It is true that many people said that he was just waiting to pounce. They attributed masterly strategy to him in keeping quiet when the Czechoslovakian *coup* failed to come off. In my opinion he was stymied and knew it.

Herr Hitler is not a highly educated man nor trained in a true knowledge of humanity but he has genius and, curiously enough, the German equivalent of the Non-conformist conscience. There is much of the feminine in him and he suffers when his actions are misunderstood—or perhaps when they are understood.

Looking at the world following the Czechoslovakian rebuff he must have started counting his enemies. The total is not unimposing:

The Catholic Church.

A large section of the Protestant Church.

The Jews with their power of international finance and propaganda.

An angry France.

A resolute Britain arming with a disregard of cost.

A defiant Czechoslovakia.

A smouldering Russia.

A resentful America.

His own Trade Unionists.

Government Spain.

A disillusioned Austria.

Perhaps then he started counting his friends. It would not have taken him long:

A doubtful Italy which he had practically deserted in Spain so as to postpone Franco's victory and therefore the ratification of the Anglo-Italian Pact.

A Poland which looked to Germany to protect her from Russia.

A Japan caught in the Chinese floods.

And what about the small imponderables, the Balkan and Danubian States?

All of them ready to do business with Germany and none ready to accept German domination. Small wonder if Hitler found his thoughts grim companions.

There was another factor, too. The brave and portly General Goering has been taking an increasingly strong line in foreign policy. At the moment that this article is being written there is a sharp and growing cleavage between General Goering and Herr von Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister. Herr von Ribbentrop has the double honour of having been German Ambassador to London and sole parent of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. As a reward for inventing the axis he was created Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs. He has made it most evident that he believes Britain to be a fumbling democracy decadent in spirit and unwilling to rise to its responsibilities. That anti-British policy found considerable favour in Berlin. Recently, however, General Goering has been openly opposing the Foreign Minister's point of view. Goering's argument is simplicity itself:

"You might beat England, but you cannot beat Canada, Australia and South Africa as well. Or if you could defeat the whole British Empire you would then have to take on America. It is no use. If something is not done to make peace with England she will go on arming until we are at her mercy. If we fight her now or ten years from now we will be crushed."

No one is likely to accuse Goering of lack of personal courage. Herr Hitler has listened to him with growing interest. So has Herr von Ribbentrop who sees his star being challenged.

Hence the extraordinary fact that when Hitler sent

Captain Wiedemann to see Lord Halifax no one knew about it in Berlin except der Fuehrer himself. The German press began to issue denials that any such interview had taken place when to their dismay the A.D.C. arrived by aeroplane from London to give his master a faithful account of it.

In the meantime Eaton Square is blinking quietly in the sun as if nothing ever happened there more exciting than a postman making his rounds.

# *Mid-Ocean*

ON BOARD S.S. "EMPRESS OF BRITAIN."

NOT UNTIL November carpets the streets with dead leaves will His Majesty's elected representatives and those who sit in the Upper House by reason of birth resume the fume, the fury and the sedateness of debate.

When we come back the curtain will rise on the last chapter of "The Front Page" Parliament. Before we scatter to the winds for the Christmas recess of 1939, we shall have fought a general election and a new Parliament will have been born.

From those of you who have followed my story of Westminster and the strange happenings there since the election of November, 1935, I want to claim the indulgence of old friends and to muse for a moment. If poetry is emotion remembered in tranquillity then history should be truth recalled in a spirit of calm. That is why I want to abandon for once the swift impressions of the journalist and the sharp emotions of a participant and look back on what has happened like a student reviewing an age that has passed.

Admittedly this mood is engendered somewhat by being in Mid-Atlantic once more bound for Canada. Going home. . . . At what age do those words lose their magic?

A few days ago we heard for the last time in this session the policeman's shout in the Lobby: "Who's for home?"

Stanley Baldwin, speaking in the House on the death of Ramsay MacDonald, told how the villagers of Worcestershire often say of a man who has died that he has gone home.

Robert Louis Stevenson with his frail body but

undying mind wrote his own epitaph on the island where he found peace

“Home is the sailor home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.”

The Australian who has never seen England speaks of it as home. It is a word that alone can satisfy one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul.

When we reach Canada, it will all be so different from the old world—but how familiar in every detail. The white summer sun which is not even first cousin to the soft golden sun of England . . . the gigantic railway engines with their whistles that sing of distant places, so unlike the bad-tempered Pekinese squeak of the little English engines as if annoyed at having to make even their tiny journeys . . . the white clothes of the girls and the ugly wrappings of the men who still think that there is something sturdy and masculine in making no sartorial concession, save the casting of a waistcoat, to the merciless heat of August.

Home . . .

Yet as one writes the word there comes a certain inward questioning. What about that other place, the little island set like a jewel in a silver sea? . . . This England?

Supposing our trip to Canada was the end of a story and that I would never return to England again save as a visitor? It is a prospect that I have envisaged more than once and with mixed emotions. To take one's part in the life of a young country which is one's own—or to take a part in the life of an old country that was the home of one's ancestors. . . .

If Canada has a meaning to me that no other word can ever displace how difficult it would be to end the associations of twenty years' life in the old country. This tolerant England, this shrine of decency in a

disordered world, this little island which holds the destiny of Europe in its hands. It would not be easy to say good-bye.

What will historians say of the Britons of the last five years? What will they say of the Parliament which has directed its destinies since the Autumn of 1935?

We came from our constituencies to Westminster in that fateful year pledged to rearm and to be faithful to the League of Nations. Mr. Baldwin was at our head, Sir Samuel Hoare at the Foreign Office, Mr. Chamberlain at the Exchequer and Anthony Eden was the youthful unofficial leader of the new idealism.

Mussolini was waging war in Abyssinia. Should we have closed the Suez Canal against him? In other words should Britain, dangerously disarmed, have declared war against Italy and trusted that the other members of the League which had failed to send a man or a gun to the Mediterranean might come in towards the finish?

I know that the whole affair was a tremendous blow to British prestige and a cruel ending to the dream of international law. It might have been that if we had opened fire with our ships Mussolini would have thrown in his hand and ordered his army out of Abyssinia.

On the other hand it is possible that Germany would have seized the opportunity and, with Japan, precipitated a war for world power.

Events are governed by personalities. Mr. Baldwin had a hatred of war that went to the very base of his soul. Every instinct in him rebelled against the blinding and disembowelling of youth to avenge an international insult or to settle a dispute.

"Must ten million men die because a maniac fires a pistol or a murderer flings a bomb? Is there no answer to violence but violence?"

Those were the innermost thoughts that throbbed in the head of the poet-peasant-premier Baldwin. Those were the innermost thoughts of Neville Chamberlain



as well as he used his powerful influence as second-in-command to direct the course of the Government.

There was another factor too which has been recognised so little by those who have hurled abuse and contumely upon Britain for her cowardice and her supposed retreat from principle.

We have been faced with a new problem, the totalitarian state. The curse of a dictatorship is that there is no alternative government to take its place. The collapse of a dictatorship is like the falling of a cliff into the sea. The repercussions travel far beyond the cascade of waters and the startled foam that leaps towards the skies.

The British Government has been acutely conscious of this new factor, and has had to balance the visible dangers of a sustained dictatorship against the unknown dangers of a dictatorship collapse.

In the final Foreign Affairs debate of last session I ventured to warn the House against the menace of a war of desperation by Germany, and claimed that it was far more likely to happen than a war of conquest. Mr. Vyvan Adams challenged me to say whether I really believed that the leaders of any country would embark upon a war which they knew they would lose. In reply I pointed out that the rulers of a totalitarian state had no method of handing over the reins of Government to some other party since no other party existed. For them to resign and go back to their homes as private citizens would be to invite assassination from men whom they had wronged. Therefore if forced to choose between the certainty of the assassin's bullet and the gamble of a losing war, they would undoubtedly choose war.

I ask forgiveness for quoting my own speech but I know that it represents the Government's mind in facing this perplexity of totalitarianism. Never in the history of the world has foreign policy had to take into account so many contradictory factors or such endless currents and cross-currents.

It has not been easy to endure the criticism from friendly nations which by reason of their detachment failed to grasp the full intricacies of these problems. There is nothing which the British people value more highly than the friendship and esteem of the American people. We recognise the basic idealism of American thought and were therefore the more hurt that so many American newspapers and journals took the view that Britain had grown soft and was surrendering civilisation to the tyranny.

That was less than just. British foreign policy may have been wrong but it has been consistent. As a nation and as a government we held it as our supreme task to decay the use of war as an expression of political policy.

To pursue that aim we have taxed ourselves almost beyond endurance so that no weakness of armaments should induce any nation or combination of nations to embark upon a war of revenge or conquest. At the same time our Government has steadily exerted its influence towards peace and economic appeasement.

The pace has been slow and the road weary. If only America had been as great as her own soul and taken her place beside us openly and unreservedly the work of years could have been done in months. We do not discount the difficulties of the Administration at Washington nor deny the immense support which the U.S.A. gives to us by its very existence but America could have saved the world these terrible years had she trusted herself as other nations were ready to trust her.

So the burden of maintaining the standards of civilisation in Europe fell chiefly on one nation and one man—Great Britain and Neville Chamberlain. With the Abdication of Edward VIII., Stanley Baldwin laid down his task while the whole nation paid tribute to a great idealist and a great Englishman.

What will history say of his successor Neville Chamberlain?

There has never been a statesman less intoxicated with the trappings of fame, less ready to seek excuses or indulge in self-dramatisation. He is sensitive but never shows when a thrust has got home. He has dreams but will not give them words. He is gentle and human but faces the House as if he has never known emotion.

Yet when you watch a man day by day, month in and month out, you learn his secrets.

When news was brought to him that his brother Austen had died, Neville Chamberlain walked with weary feet and an aching heart. But when he faced the House next day he hid it from the gaze of his colleagues.

When the tension between Italy and Britain was reaching breaking point he sat down and wrote a personal letter to Mussolini asking why the two countries could not be friends again. Just as he refuses to dramatise himself so he will not dramatise others but believes that they are but men warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as himself.

His supreme test came when the Germans marched into Austria defying international opinion and declaring that German necessity knew no law but itself.

The House of Commons met on the following Monday in an atmosphere of deep and furious resentment. From every side came the demand that Britain should at once declare to Germany that if she made one move against Czechoslovakia, Britain would march.

Liberals, Labourites and Conservatives alike urged this course. British public opinion was with them and so was foreign sentiment. Never did a Premier have such an opportunity to win plaudits and frenzied adulation by a single gesture.

And all he said was that in the course of the next two or three days he would outline the Government's policy.

Was that smallness or greatness? I claim that it was the action of a man who put responsibility ahead of

self-aggrandisement, and refused to compromise with his own conscience.

Almost alone he saw the danger and unwisdom of an ultimatum. With the whole world angered at the cynical march into Austria, with the German people feeling their first grave doubts of their leader's wisdom, an ultimatum from Britain would have obscured the issue and rallied all forces in Germany to Hitler's side.

Instead Chamberlain waited until passions had cooled and then made that famous speech which altered the whole face of European politics.

"We shall not pledge ourselves to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia. At the same time if France becomes involved in a war over this issue it is only right to state that we shall almost certainly be drawn into it, and our intervention will be on the side of those countries with whom we have a common interest."

Did Solomon ever say anything more wise? That speech warned Russia, Czechoslovakia and France that if they went to war they could not count on Britain marching with them. Then it warned Germany that if she took advantage of Britain's refusal to wage war she would find Great Britain at the end of the road and that Germany would be crushed by the force of British arms.

From that moment the blustering speeches of the dictatorships ended. No one can foresee the future, but with the little vision that is granted to men I claim that that speech marked the beginning of the hopes, if not the certainty of peace.

But it was not to come about without a challenge from the Fates. There was the famous week-end of 21st May, when, rightly or wrongly, Europe believed that Germany was about to invade the Sudeten territory of Czechoslovakia. It may or may not have been true, but it is enough that it was believed to be so.

Without a moment's hesitation Chamberlain assumed the leadership of Europe. He had won that right by the

patience, and disinterestedness of British policy. He spoke like a master, and the nations listened to his voice.

You have heard that British prestige has been trampled in the mud and that the British flag is held in contempt by nations glorying in their own strength. Nor do I deny the many humiliations that have roused the deepest resentment in all of us, who have British blood in our veins.

Yet when I travelled across Europe shortly after the events of that fateful week-end I found the name of Britain held in such esteem and in such honour in one country after another that I was moved to a pride of citizenship that I could not have expressed in words.

Nor was it, as might be thought, merely because Britain had shown such unexpected resolution over Czechoslovakia. I found instead a feeling of respect and gratitude that there was one great nation which had the strength of a giant but would not use it as a tyrant, a nation where people were free to come and go, a nation which hated war and would endure to the uttermost for peace, a nation where freedom was master and the State existed to ensure the rights of the individual.

In Germany and Austria I encountered this deep respect as well as in Rumania and Czechoslovakia. "England can come with a corporal's guard," said a minister of one of the Balkan countries, "and all Europe will follow her."

My friends who have been to Spain tell me the same thing. Both sides say that Britain has not tried to advantage herself or injure Spain because of her civil war. They say that they will remember that in the years to come.

Perhaps it was this knowledge that caused a strange and moving scene in the House of Commons in the closing days of the last session. We had met for the last Foreign Affairs debate. It was opened by the Opposition Liberal, Sir Archibald Sinclair, who trained his guns

on the Government Front Bench where Mr. Chamberlain sat with his colleagues tired but imperturbable waiting for the shells to explode.

For twenty minutes the bombardment went on when, suddenly, Sinclair stopped. Leaning forward and speaking with a strange gentleness he said:

"I am sure the thought uppermost in the mind of the Prime Minister—whose courage and industry in shouldering this heavy burden of responsibility we all admire, however much we dissent from his policy—is the preservation of peace."

The mere words do scant justice to the sincerity and kindness of Sinclair's manner. Chamberlain looked up startled, then suddenly covered his face with his hands. Sinclair said some stumbling words as if to ease the situation but the eyes of the whole House were on the Prime Minister. For a full minute he sat there with his face buried in his hands. When he at last straightened himself up and looked across the floor of the House there were still tears in his eyes.

Half an hour later he rose to make his poorest speech of the session. Kindness had broken down the defences which had withstood all ridicule. For so many months he had borne the weight of supreme responsibility and endured alike the humiliation of events and the sneers of his critics yet never once had asked for patience or for pity.

Then one of his opponents in a moment of generosity had revealed the simple humanity of the man who was supposed to be without emotion.

History may yet arraign this Parliament. No one can see the end of the road which we are travelling.

But whether we have been right or wrong, Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain have tried to bring to the task of government the teaching and practices of the Christian faith. Neither has avoided the blunders of

miscalculation and indecision. Nor have they claimed to be more than men or sought a pedestal above their fellows.

Destiny called them—and in their own way they have answered that call.

To their own selves they have been true. That is their answer to the challenge of the Fates.

T H E   E N D

